NOVEMBER 1999

NEA Today

The Magazine of the National Education Association

Talking Vouchers

Diana Herrera can help you counter public school bashers–and their phony claims.

See page 8

NEA Today

Volume 18 • Number 3

COVER STORY

Will you be ready to respond at this year's Thanksgiving table if someone starts bashing public schools and promoting vouchers? NEA members in San Antonio have some ideas that can help you stand up and speak out for public education.

On the cover: San Antonio teacher Diana Herrera, with her son and daughter in the background, is a staunch defender of public schools—and an articulate opponent of vouchers. Cover photo by Lee Celano

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Letters

MISPLACED BLAME

As an elementary teacher and avid supporter of hunting, I would like to express my opinion on gun control laws (Debate, October). I feel it's time to stop blaming inanimate objects and start putting the blame where it belongs—people.

Are we going to take away a person's right to drive automobiles? Are automobiles not one of the leading causes of death that we face each day? We aren't going to ban cars. Why, then, are we so concerned about stronger gun laws?

If human beings want to go on a destructive rampage, they are going to find the means to do so. Let's look to the real problem, not what some feel is an "easy" solution. Parents take care of your children. Spend time with them. Show them support, and, most importantly, teach them human compassion and the difference between right and wrong.

Tina Graven
Clarksville, Iowa

As an NEA and NRA member, I found it quite reassuring that most of my fellow professinals, via the online poll, show that they have similar views as mine. More gun control laws are not the answers to safer schools.

Children (and adults) who take firearms to school are already breaking many existing laws. They need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent for breaking these laws.

Matt Kreider
Stevens, Pennsylvania

Even if Congrss made stronger gun laws or banned guns altogether, the criminals and the possible criminals will still get the guns. Most guns used in crimes are not bought legally. Why should we punish law-abiding citizens by taking away possibly their only way to protect themselves.

Jessica Merritt
Campbellsville, Kentucky

Sherry McMorris weakens her case against stronger gun laws when she fails to note the differences between Switzerland's militia having weapons and America's freedom to have personal 9-millimeter pistols (Debate, October).

The original intent of the Second Amendment was to guarantee the various state militias' right to keep and bear arms "necessary to the security of a free state."

McMorris believes that the proliferation of guns today is not the problem (of America's high death rate from guns). Then she compares Switzerland with Great Britain in deaths caused by guns, and finds a slight difference in favor of Switzerland. But she omits comparing their rates with the rate in the United States. America's rate is hundreds of times higher than the rate of either country.

I have to be on the side of controlling non-recreational guns.

Warren Himmelberger
Littleton, Massachusetts

Your debate column revisits a real problem in American society today. While I agree with Sherry McMorris that more gun control laws aren't the solution, both she and her opponent fail to promote the enforcement of the multitude of existing laws.

More laws wouldn't stop the criminal from obtaining firearms. They would make his victims less able to protect themselves. But I also agree with McMorris when she addresses the need to change youth attitudes toward violence.

Respect for, and understanding of their peers, is lacking in too many youngsters' character.

Richard Faber
Morristown, New Jersey

PROFESSIONAL?

In my opinion, you really blew it this time!

Included in my union dues every month, is a fee to pay for your magazine. If I could get out of paying it, I would! However, at this time, there is no way.

What got me so riled? On the center of pages 16 and 17 of the October 1999 NEA Today ("Alongside of Excellence") was an article on paraeducators. It talked about why we should be professional and why we should be treated as professionals.

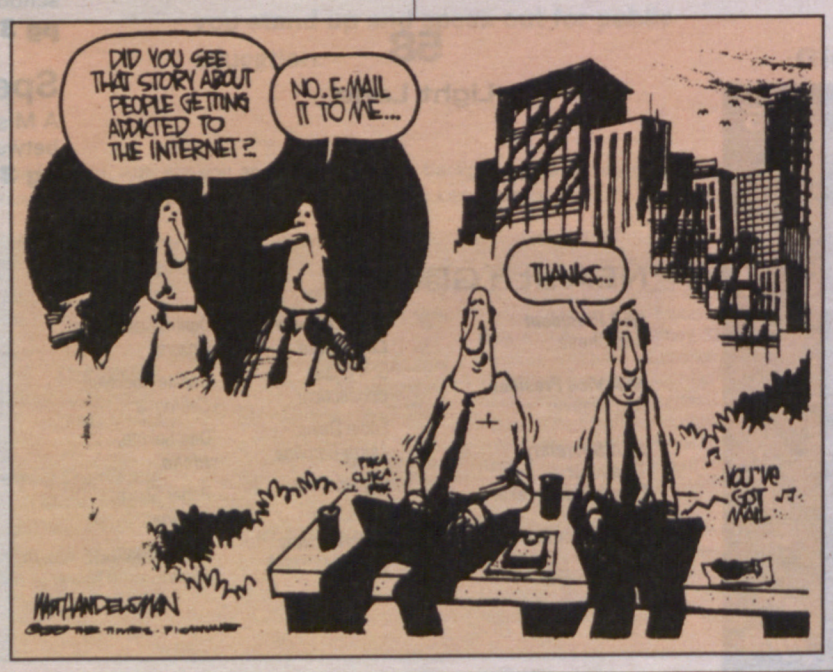
I have 19 total years as a para-ed, with seven in my current district. I honestly agreed with the article.

But, on the very next column of page 17, was another article ("Eat in Peace"), with the information that a school district is hiring "aides" so that teachers can have a duty-free lunch! Excuse me?

Let me see, I have worked 19 years—and tried hard to be professional—just so that the one magazine that is supposed to show me some respect can be used to tell teachers that a district is hiring "aides" so that teachers can have a duty free lunch.

Sorry, but to me that article made me feel like a babysitter instead of a professional. Is this really the message that you want to send to teachers?

Pat Philipp
Lakewood, Washington


DID YOU SEE THAT STORY ABOUT PEOPLE GETTING ADDICTED TO THE INTERNET?
NO. E-MAIL IT TO ME...
THANKS...
YOU'VE GOT MAIL
MATHANDELSMAN

FACTS, NOT FEAR

The After Littleton letters (September) were interesting but somewhat bothersome. Unfortunately the major portion of the news since Littleton has focused on increased violence in schools, and it seems a majority of the population has accepted this media spin of the situation without checking on the "facts" themselves. The results of this blind acceptance have left us with a "the sky is falling" approach to eliminating violence.

Has anyone noticed that the crime rate has been falling since 1990 and that, in fact, violence in our schools is also decreasing, yes, decreasing?

Check the Youth Risk Behavior Survey published in the August 4, 1999 *Journal of the American Medical Association* for a start.

Some numbers from that report: Between 1993 and 1997, the number of students who brought weapons to school dropped 28 percent. The number in physical fights at school decreased 9 percent, and the number in fights off school grounds dropped 14 percent.

Let's review the research and define the problem. Let's look at what has been working and get on with solutions to the problems. The facts do not sell newspapers or increase ratings but they will help us solve the problems. Let's get on with the work at hand.

Stan Bell
La Crosse, Wisconsin

TEACHING VALUES

With all the concern about academic standards and test scores, the idea that we should teach students to be decent human being is not often a priority. The tragedy in Littleton, however, may move the pendulum in the other direction.

I believe that "values education" absolutely belongs in the public schools. Those who argue against believe that values education would compromise the separation of church and state.

I agree that a values curriculum would be difficult to plan, yet I do think there are certain basic ethical codes that a majority of people could agree on. For example, the maxim "first do no harm" comes to mind.

Perhaps a curriculum drawn from psychology would be appropriate. Students could be trained in conflict resolution, self-esteem, and emotions management at each grade level in an age-appropriate manner.

A high-quality values curriculum, I believe, would correlate positively with academic achievement. Much of what distracts children and adolescents from their studies would be resolved or quickly dealt with through the arsenal of skills provided by such a curriculum.

It is my opinion that we owe it to our students to provide social and emotional guidance—as well as academic.

Jennifer Cole
Clark, New Jersey

The day we can guarantee that all children who enter our classrooms will come from homes where their parents value them, are involved in the education process, love them, feed them, read to them, teach them right from wrong, and teach them values and respect will be the day that we might consider evaluating teachers by their students' test scores (Debate, March).

Mignonne Cummings
Sumner, Washington

SHARING IDEAS

I would like to see a page of ideas from across the country in *NEA Today* about how schools are involv-

ing their communities in helping to make their campuses safe. It's not just a school-based problem. The problem lies in the homes and the communities. Young people use the schools as forums to act out their pain, prejudice, and disillusionment.

We can all draw ideas from one another if we share nationally.

Bonnie Lashbrook
Cooper City, Florida

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- By mail: Write to Letters, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
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- By E-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org
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- By Phone: 202/822-7201

Letters are edited for length and clarity.

MUSIC LESSONS

I was so pleased to read about the violist in the school (People, September). As a teacher and a violist, I have often played in the schools for a variety of students. I now teach science and apply the sound to wave study, motion of sound waves, and many other science topics.

My students see the instrument (a fat violin) as an extension of my teaching. I see it as a way to continue to open my high school students to options, both scientifically and in the appreciation of the fine arts.

Betsy Spivey
Polson, Montana

DON'T KNOW MUCH INDEED

Your September cover title, "Don't Know Much about Technology," was appropriate. Like most educators you incorrectly use the word technology when what you mean is computers. In my history classes, I have to explain the difference.

Last year, I had two students argue with me that technology does mean computers because other teachers have used the word that way.

I thought our job was to fight ignorance, not perpetuate it.

Jeffrey Cullen
Bowling Green, Ohio

SMOKING MAD

As president of the Jefferson County Teachers Association, I write to express my outrage concerning the ad that appeared in the September issue ("Do you want the Marlboro Man in your classroom?").

The ad clearly implies that the Jefferson County Public Schools has accepted money from Philip Morris and Brown & Williamson tobacco companies.

This assertion is untrue! I am more than disappointed that NEA would allow an ad to be run that reflects negatively on a school district of one of NEA's largest locals. It would seem only reasonable that NEA would have some system for checking the content accuracy of such an ad prior to printing.

Laura Kirchner
Louisville, Kentucky

Editor's note:

The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids apologizes for the inaccuracies in its ad. The Jefferson County Health Department, not the Jefferson County Pubic Schools, received the tobacco money and the funds came from Brown & Williamson, not Philip Morris.

APPLES AND ORANGES

Yes, Japanese and Chinese students have more homework than American kids (Inside Scoop, April), but their homework is rarely turned in let alone graded.

Japanese children carry a homework journal for communication between parents and teachers. That is the only extent homework enters their classroom.

Of course, Japanese teachers have much more time to communicate with parents than we do. Japanese law limits teacher instructional days to no more than 24 hours for a six-day week, four hours per day.

Imagine what we could do for our students if we had their schedule.

The 25 hours of weekly homework alluded to in your article concerns Japanese cram schools, which are prevalent only with high school students.

Keith Ensminger
Merced, California

ON GRANTS WRITING

I believe it's unfair to make districts that are too small to have a full-time grant writer compete with districts with a full time grant writer for federal grants (Dilemma, May).

I'm a school counselor, so I don't have a guaranteed prep time. I also have to attend about four hours worth of child study team and multidisciplinary team meetings each week.

I work on grants before school, after school, and weekends. But I also believe everyone should contribute to such efforts, so I cancel some of the classroom guidance classes I would normally teach during those weeks and use some district in-service time.

What can NEA do to ensure that there are two categories of competition for grants?

Bertha Haas
Umatilla, Oregon

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

Good-Mouthing Public Schools

Nobody is a more persuasive advocate for public schools than the teachers and support staff who work in them every day.

Standards. High-stakes tests. Low-performing schools. For many teachers and support staff, the policy debate over these issues in state capitals and Washington, D.C., comes across like thunder on Mt. Olympus. It's far removed from our classroom daily life, but ever so capable of producing a lightning bolt that can singe us.

As educators, we often grumble that policy decisions are being made by people who are out of touch with the reality of our classrooms.

So what should we do? Stew silently and wait for the storm to blow over? I don't think so. Silence only isolates us, and this storm isn't blowing over anytime soon.

We must speak up, both as an Association and individuals. We must inform the great education debate—whether that debate is taking place in legislative chambers or around the Thanksgiving holiday table.

Please do not underestimate the power of our collective voices. Our Association can go out and hire skilled public relations professionals, but these professionals will be the first to tell you that there is nothing more persuasive than real teachers or school support staff speaking up for their students and their school.

Our words carry great weight with the public. When we speak, people listen, because people understand we care about children. We bridge the gap between lofty theory and everyday practice.

It's one thing, for example, to declare that every child should be reading to grade level by the 4th grade, and quite another to achieve that goal when your school provides no tutors for children who have fallen behind.

It's one thing to talk about parental involvement, and quite another to have the parent of a chronically disruptive student tell you, "I've done all I can with him—now it's up to you."

When the policy choices are made, we must be heard. Should we build more sports stadiums? Cut taxes to comfort the already comfortable? Or invest long-term in the difficult task of maximizing learning for all children?

And it's one thing to be scolded that your students are not doing well enough on standardized tests, but quite another to teach a class where student transiency rates exceed 30 percent—which happens to be the case in one of five high schools in California.

We need to bring reality, with all its friction and frustration, to the education policy debate. And here's the good news. We can defend the public schools without being defensive. We can defend public schools without glossing over their shortcomings.

America's K-12 public schools today educate nine out of every 10 children. We educate more students to higher level of academic accomplishment than ever before in history. SAT and ACT scores, despite what the voucherites and privatizers would have us believe, have risen throughout the 1990s. And, this fall, we saw 67 percent of all college-age young people in America attending college. Sixty-seven percent—that's a record. When I went to college, the percentage was less than half that.

There's more good news. Public opinion polls show that the public wants just what we want: discipline and order, smaller class sizes, and quality teachers. This is common ground upon which we can build.

But even more important than a common ground is our moral ground. As educators, we believe every child deserves a quality school. We refuse to accept the educational apartheid that provides children of low-income families with inferior resources and facilities. This is unconscionable.

In a democracy, we understand, public schools are where children from all classes and places acquire the skills to pursue their dreams. Revitalized public schools, not vouchers, are the only credible hope for most children.

When the policy choices are made, we must be heard. Should we build more sports stadiums? Cut taxes to comfort the already comfortable? Or invest long-term in the difficult task of maximizing learning for all children?

To remain silent is to be complicit in the bad choices our society sometimes makes. Let us, together, raise up our voices. ✔

★★★

THESE DAYS, KIDS PICK UP THE DARNEDEST THINGS IN SCHOOL.

(AND WE'RE GIVING TEACHERS AWARDS FOR IT.)

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Lost in the Cracks

What you've been taught may not be what you need to teach.

BY MERYL DANZIGER

Did the teacher training courses that some of us remember only dimly prepare us for anything but children sitting at desks, eyes on the teacher?

Do we really know what to make of a student who, after gazing out the window for a good long while, suddenly decides to share his daydreaming in the middle of a spelling lesson?

In real life these interruptions are as familiar as they are exasperating for a teacher trying valiantly to keep a class focused on what school deems most beneficial for the majority.

Yet what each outburst may represent, in the big picture, is a child daring to reveal his quintessential self to an audience unlikely to be appreciative and risking disappproval and even punishment in the process.

This morning I walked into the office and there stood Joe, a second grader, waiting to use the telephone. Because Joe's reputation has been firmly established through anecdotes circulated in the teachers' room, I assumed that "Absent-minded Joe," had forgotten something (again) and was calling home to have it delivered. Then I happened to look down at his feet.

"Uh, Joe, it looks as though you're wearing two left shoes."

Joe has the look of someone who has just awoken from a trance to find himself in a strange time and place; he seems baffled by his surroundings and appears to be far away in thought.

Preserving his "other-worldly" demeanor, he begins: "Well, I took the wrong shoes from my mother and there was this pile of shoes my mother had and I have a size 9 on this foot and a size 10 on this foot!"

"Both left?" I ask.

"Yeah."

Whatever Joe's story lacked in clarity, it made up for in form: the building suspense, a pregnant pause, the climax. By these standards, Joe is a natural storyteller.

"What's the problem?"

The no-nonsense voice of the school secretary brought us back to business. Joe looked at her with some mistrust, not daring to believe that he was going to get another crack at straightening out his story, then plunged eagerly into a considerably less comprehensible version.

Meryl Danziger believes all students have particular gifts and talents—that are not always appreciated, respected, and nurtured.

Leo Sorel

An uncle and a neighbor's dog made cryptic appearances as our protagonist improvised with a desperate energy, lest he lose his rapt audience. "So I have to call home so she can bring . . ." and here he paused, unsure of whether he wanted a right size 9 or a right size 10. The monologue sputtered to a halt as Joe looked down at his toes, all curving to the right.

The chance to begin the day with a child like Joe, so predictably unpredictable, is one of the reasons I love the teaching profession. Every day children's natural, impulsive behavior reminds us that life can be interesting. These impulses occur constantly, despite our best efforts to keep children on well-defined, adult-structured paths.

Joe has a talent for "mind-wandering," which will probably not find its niche in the conventional educational framework. It is so much easier to deal with the tangible, and those talents which are hard to label and measure are not encouraged in a school setting. It's too bad, because it is so easy to be misunderstood. Who among us has not felt the frustration of watching people walk away before they "got the idea" of what we were trying to say? It is almost impossible to be a compassionate teacher without having experienced this pain.

Joe's stories tend to ramble, but they represent his perspective on the world, and therefore his essence. If Joe's peculiar gifts are discovered and nurtured by a wise mentor, he will feel respected and be more receptive to learning in general. If not, his teachers will feel frustrated by his determination to be true to himself.

It is heartbreaking to see children who, by the second week of kindergarten, are beginning to believe that forming a straight line is more important than discovering who they are. In our daily subjugation to routine, can we but admire the child whose reveries let him come to school wearing one size 9 shoe and one size 10, both left?

Meryl Danziger is on leave from her position as a music teacher in East Haven, Connecticut. Reach her at mdanzig@javanet.com. ✔

It's always nice to see stories in other publications about NEA members who first appeared in *NEA Today*. It happens often.

California teacher Jim Dieckmann was on the cover of *NEA Today* in 1997, touting the benefits of technology for his students at Clear View Charter School in Chula Vista.

Bill Fischer
editor

Last September, Dieckmann and his students were part of a feature story in *USA Today*.

Dieckmann's school is one of five spotlighted in *Learn & Live*, a series of hour-long documentaries narrated by Robin Williams that airs on public television this fall. (Check local listings for time.)

The series is co-produced by the George Lucas Foundation, a California nonprofit dedicated to promoting innovative teaching, and State of the Art, a Washington, D.C., multimedia company.

Howard Gardner, whose multiple intelligences theory has sparked educational innovation everywhere, adds commentary to the film.

Dieckmann's students have access to some of the best, most innovative technology, the *USA Today* story points out. But what really excites Dieckmann is his students' involvement with the technology.

"You can see their desire to do their very best," he points out, "and not only in science."

The program has had a "tremendous effect on his students," adds Dieckmann. Some have gone from being truants to model students.

The Dieckmann spotlight is just one part of the work Lucas is doing to showcase innovative teachers and how they use technology to spark creativity and imagination. The Lucas Foundation is aiming to highlight school successes and help teachers in the digital age.

A kit that includes a video of *Learn and Live* and a 300-page resource book can be purchased by calling 888/475-4371. Or check the Lucas Education Foundation Web site at www.glef.org.

Bill Fischer

Lee Celano

This Thanksgiving, with family and friends all gathered around the holiday table, will you be ready to respond if Uncle Harry starts bashing public schools and pushing vouchers?

Talking Turkey

Does talk about vouchers leave you speechless? Here's some help.

It's Thanksgiving Day. You're seated around the dining table surrounded by family and friends. Above the clank of forks and knives your family chatters away about movies, sports, the latest gossip, how good the food is.

The talk moves from turkey and mashed potatoes to kids and school. Your uncle starts boasting about "finally getting his kids out of those terrible public schools."

Thanks to a new voucher program, he says, his kids are attending private school. He looks you square in the eye.

"I can't believe you let your kids go to public school," he says, "let alone work there!"

What do you do?

a) Look away in silence.
b) Stammer a line or two about your latest classroom project.
c) Say "pass the potatoes please."
d) All of the above.

If you feel awkward when you're confronted with arguments for vouchers, you're not alone. Many NEA members know in their gut that it's wrong to subsidize private school tuition with public tax dollars, but aren't sure how best to rebut the claims made by voucher promoters.

But other NEA members, like Diana Briseno Herrera, who teaches the Gifted and Talented program at Henry B. Gonzalez school in San Antonio's Edgewood school district, are anything but speechless when confronted by voucher promoters.

Hardly anything, in fact, gets this Texas native more riled up than the claims she hears about vouchers.

"When I run into my neighbors, friends, family—anyone—I go up to them and I tell them, we have a real fight on our hands," Herrera says. "These vouchers are literally taking dollars away from our public schools."

> "We have a real fight on our hands. These vouchers are literally taking dollars away from our public schools."

Last year, an organization called CEO America began a privately funded voucher program aimed at Edgewood's largely Hispanic community. Herrera joined forces with parents, community activists, and other educators to fight back.

Together, they formed a coalition to educate their community about vouchers. Then, with help from the Texas State Teachers Association, the group descended on the state capitol in Austin to lobby against legislation that would allow the use of public funds to pay for private school vouchers.

In neighborhoods city-wide, Herrera and other educators spoke sense to parents, warning that voucher schools were only accepting select students from their community.

"The private schools are literally handpicking their students," says Herrera, the recently elected president of the Edgewood Teachers Association. "They only want the cream of the crop."

Adds Herrera: "As public school educators, we need to meet the needs of all

students, from those with low abilities to the gifted. If a child is in special education, private schools won't meet the child's needs."

Of all the children who left Edgewood public schools for the voucher schools, Herrera points out, only two were enrolled in special ed.

Vouchers for private school tuition, Herrera also notes, encourage the launching of fly-by-night private schools with little accountability.

"Down the street there's a bar and pool hall," she says. "Last year they turned it into a voucher academy. No one who taught there had a degree or was certified."

NEA member Karen Rodriguez, the former president of the Edgewood local Association, asks parents to look beyond the voucher surface and realize there's no such thing as a free ride.

"It's a Catch-22 for many of these families," she explains. "They get a voucher to a private school, but if they don't have a car, they can't get their kid there. They have to pay to get the child to school."

Corinne Sabo is a public school advocate who works against vouchers alongside NEA members. Sabo's message about vouchers is simple.

"Vouchers are literally tearing families apart in places like Edgewood," she says. "A parent pulls a kid out of public school, and the parent's brother says 'Hey, you're taking money away from my kid who's still in public school.'"

Because people like Sabo spoke up in Edgewood, the voucher legislation did not make it through the Texas legislature. The state cannot use public funds for private school tuition. Still, educators remain vigilant—on guard for the next voucher offensive.

Will you be ready if that offensive targets your community? At right: some food for thought the next time you hear someone begin talking turkey about vouchers. ✔

—Karen Gutloff

Roberta Barnes

Earlier this year, efforts by NEA members like Karen Rodriguez helped stop legislation in Texas that would have funneled public tax dollars into private schools.

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!
Countering the Myths About Vouchers

CLAIM: Vouchers don't take money from the public schools.

FACT: In areas where vouchers have been introduced, public schools have had their funds drastically cut.

To pay for Cleveland's voucher program, Ohio transferred over $5 million from the public school share of the state's Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid program. The voucher program in Milwaukee is shifting $25 million away from public schools.

These diversions leave public schools students with less money for textbooks, computers, and supplies.

Much has been made about the cleverly titled "opportunity scholarships"—the privately funded vouchers for disadvantaged minority students. These sound perfectly harmless, but their impact on public schools can be just as damaging as vouchers funded by taxpaper dollars.

Public schools lose state funding when students leave to attend voucher schools. San Antonio's Edgewood public school district has lost close to $5 million as a result of "opportunity scholarships" distributed by CEO America.

CLAIM: Students in voucher schools perform better than public school students.

FACT: Private schools rank no better scholastically than comparable public schools.

Official studies of voucher plans in Cleveland and Milwaukee conclude that vouchers don't improve overall student achievement.

In Milwaukee, Professor Alex Molnar's comparison of student achievement found that public school students attending schools with smaller class sizes registered greater achievement gains than students in the voucher schools.

For the same money that Milwaukee spends on vouchers for 6,500 students, the district could put 13,000 students in smaller classes—with better academic results.

CLAIM: The public supports vouchers.

FACT: Given the choice, an overwhelming majority of Americans would rather improve public schools than pay for vouchers.

Two recent national polls have quizzed Americans on their attitudes toward vouchers and public schools: the August 1999 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll a survey conducted jointly by National Public Radio, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Both polls show that Americans would rather invest in improving public schools than bankroll private school tuition with tax dollars.

The Gallup Poll found that, by a margin of 70-28 percent, Americans prefer "improving and strengthening the existing public schools" to "providing vouchers" for private and church-related schools.

And the NPR poll, a random phone survey of 1,442 people nationwide, found that 75 percent of Americans would be willing to pay an additional $200 in taxes to improve their public schools, while 55 percent would be willing to pay an additional $500.

CLAIM: Vouchers give every parent the choice to send their children to the school of their choosing.

FACT: In the private school world, choice belongs only to private school administrators. They choose which students are admitted to their schools.

Private schools have the right to reject or accept any student, regardless of whether the student holds a voucher. Private school officials often choose the so-called "desirable" students and leave those they would find more difficult to educate for the public schools.

Experience has shown voucher programs weed out applicants, taking only the best and brightest students from public schools. Students in special education programs are the most often rejected, since three-quarters of private schools offer no special ed programs.

A 1998 U.S. Department of Education report found that 46 percent of private schools would not accept vouchers if they had to accept students randomly. Even more, 68 percent, would not accept vouchers if they had to accept special-needs students.

CLAIM: Private schools are better managed and offer more accountability to parents.

FACT: Vouchers funnel public dollars to private schools, yet taxpayers have little say in how voucher schools are run.

Private schools do not have to meet basic accountability standards required of public schools, everything from holding open meetings to releasing information on test scores and dropout rates.

And, most alarmingly, newspapers are uncovering more and more instances where voucher schools are taking taxpayers for a ride.

Since 1996, for example, six Milwaukee voucher schools have closed, and top officials at two have been indicted for criminal fraud. In Cleveland, the voucher program went 41 percent over budget one year, with an incredible $1.5 million spent on taxicab fares.

The absence of accountability is also clearly evident in staffing. Only 71 percent of private school teachers are licensed, compared to 97 percent of public school teachers.

CLAIM: Private scholarships and vouchers provide "opportunities" to children who don't have any.

FACT: Vouchers offer limited opportunities at best.

The "opportunity scholarships" conducted by lottery leave many children behind. The "scholarships" aren't enough, in themselves, to cover private tuition. And few private schools are located in economically depressed areas.

Some low-income families may benefit from vouchers, but the vast majority of poor people depend on public schools. These schools will have fewer resources if taxpayer dollars are sidetracked into private tuition.

NEA Mobilizes Against Vouchers

Under the banner of "choice," well-financed voucher promoters are pushing voucher initiatives onto state-wide ballots and into proposed legislation.

NEA and NEA affiliates are mobilizing to combat this voucher offensive through activities that range from community organizing to legal action.

In states like Texas, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, NEA affiliates are educating communities about the impact of vouchers on public schools.

In Washington, Oregon, California, and Colorado, NEA member efforts have helped defeat voucher initiatives.

In states like Florida and Ohio, NEA is mounting court challenges to legislatively enacted voucher legislation.

Minority communities have been specifically targeted by voucher forces. In response, NEA is collaborating with voucher opponents like the national NAACP, the Urban League, and the National Council of La Raza.

But the ultimate weapon against vouchers, notes Phil McLaurin from NEA's Office for Public Education Advocacy, is quality public education.

"We're continuing our work on improving academic achievement and increasing parent and community support for public education." ✔

Vouchers: Coming Soon To a School Near You?

These states figure to be "hot spots" for voucher action in the coming year:

- Arizona: CEO America and the Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) — two pro-voucher organizations—have a strong presence here.
- Arkansas: Home base of John Walton, the Wal-Mart heir who founded both CEO America and CSF.
- Florida: Watch for court challenges to current legislation and the fallout from the implementation of the voucher program signed into law earlier this year.
- Louisiana: Strong voucher lobbying by church officials makes it likely that this state will remain a voucher hot spot.
- Michigan: Amway multi-millionaire Richard DeVos is pouring money into a voucher campaign. Voucher promoters are pushing a ballot initiative that would amend the state's constitution to allow taxpayer subsidies for private schools. The constitution currently prohibits the use of public money by religious institutions.
- New Hampshire: CEO America and CSF are especially active in this state.
- Ohio: A continued focal point of the voucher debate as courts sort out problems with the current voucher program in Cleveland.
- Pennsylvania: Money from the Allegheny Institute and Richard Mellon Scaife, the wealthy sugar-daddy of many anti-public education efforts, will help fund extensive voucher efforts. CSF is also very active in the state.
- Virginia: May surface as another voucher battleground, depending on which political party gains control of the General Assembly.
- Wisconsin: Milwaukee was the first school system in the country to try a voucher system. Look for ongoing debate on how to make voucher schools accountable to the public. ✔

RESOURCES

For More Information On Vouchers

The NEA Web site offers a host of articles, fact sheets, legislative analysis, and position statements on vouchers. The site also links to NEA state affiliates involved in voucher issues. Check www.nea.org/issues.

Another good resource is People For the American Way. Check the Web at www.pfaw.org for material on the impact of vouchers on education.

Q&A

Florida's much ballyhooed voucher program gets failing marks from Pinellas County Association leader Michelle Dennard.

Why Florida's 'A+' Voucher Plan Gets an 'F'

Educators in Florida are dealing with the aftermath of a fierce storm that rolled through the Sunshine State last spring.

That storm—the "A+" voucher plan pushed through the state legislature by Governor Jeb Bush—went into effect this school year.

Beginning in September, students in public schools that receive failing grades from the state can receive vouchers for private school tuition.

Michelle Dennard, the vice president of the Pinellas County Classroom Teachers Association, spoke to *NEA Today* about why the new "A+" plan gets an "F" from educators.

What's the problem with Florida's new voucher law?

First of all, it's taking money away from public schools that are the neediest. Instead of helping schools that need help the most, this plan punishes them for not meeting the state standard.

There are more effective ways to help schools than taking away their resources. The Governor calls it grading, I call it degrading. And the law is filled with holes when it comes to the accountability of private schools.

What are those "holes"?

Funds are being diverted from public schools to private institutions that are not held to the same standards that public schools must meet.

To receive voucher money, a private school only has to show it's fiscally sound. The law says nothing about how academically sound a private school has to be.

Florida now is assessing schools to determine which ones are failing. Is there a problem with that?

As educators we strongly believe in assessment. We assess all the time in our classrooms. But assessment should be ongoing. We assess student learning by evaluating students at the beginning, middle, and end. And we adjust instruction to help them meet their targets.

But this state assessment is a one-time deal. Based on a given test on a given day, schools will be judged as successful or failing.

What can help schools?

This A+ plan has no input from educators at all.

Given the chance to be part of the process, we could all work together on behalf of kids—instead of having something imposed on us. ✔

Are charter schools eroding support for public schools?

LINDA VITIELLO *is in her fifth year as president of the Somerville Teachers Association in Massachusetts. The 20-year Association activist has taught at Somerville's Carr, Forster, and Winter Hill Schools in grades six, four, and three.*

yes

Yes, charter schools erode support for public education. Our experience in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—especially in my home town of Somerville—is that charter schools siphon off much needed financial support, skim the most able students, and are totally unaccountable to the communities they serve.

Charter schools in my state have been labled "successful" though they are still in their infancy. That notion of success is based on a number of myths.

Myth 1: Charter schools foster innovation and non-charter schools do not.

Reality: Public schools have long offered innovative programs not yet available in many charter schools. Among these programs: ESL/bilingual education, special needs programs, HIV/AIDS education, dropout prevention programs, career education, conflict resolution, and much more.

The Massachusetts charter school law, its supporters say, will improve all schools, because charter schools will share their programs with non-charter public schools.

But the Somerville charter school, run by the for-profit company, SABIS International, uses a copyrighted curriculum that SABIS refuses to share with the public schools unless it is purchased from SABIS. Haven't the taxpayers already paid for it?

Myth 2: Charter schools provide much needed competition.

Reality: In Massachusetts, charter schools receive funds based on the average cost per student, rather than the per-pupil cost specific to the grade level and program of the student.

Special, bilingual, and vocational education programs are factored in the average, along with the less expensive regular education costs. As a result, the student "average" is quite high.

The bottom line: A regular education third grade charter school student in Somerville costs the taxpayer $2,000 more than the third grade student enrolled in the Somerville public schools.

Myth 3: Charter schools fill a need, are accountable, and provide parents with a choice.

Reality: The Massachusetts law allows no local approval of Commonwealth Charter Schools. The decision on whether to grant a charter and where the school will be located is made entirely by the State Board of Education.

The law only requires notice and a public hearing, which doesn't even have to take place in the community where the charter school will be located.

In Somerville, the mayor, Board of Aldermen, School Committee, Parent Teachers Association, and the Somerville Teachers Association all went on record opposed to the granting of a for-profit charter school.

Despite this community sentiment, the charter was granted, though fewer than 20 parents applied for the charter.

The only thing "public" about the Massachusetts Commonwealth charter schools is that they use public money.

In my opinion, charter schools are not just eroding support for public schools, they are destroying them. ✔

LINDA PAGE *is a lead teacher at the CIVA Charter High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. A 20-year public school teacher, Page was a member of the Colorado Springs Education Assocation charter school development team.*

no

Blaming charter schools for the erosion of support for public education is like blaming yesterday's rain for the carving of the Grand Canyon. It has taken a number of years for public confidence in our public schools to be where it is today. Charter schools, in their relatively short history, can hardly be blamed for the erosion. But they can reasonably be viewed as one response to already eroded support for public education.

As a public school teacher for over 20 years, I believe in public education. My involvement in our NEA local affiliate's charter school effort came about because I wanted to take an active part in improving public schools.

The cry for reform in public education has been growing for a number of years. Whether the outcry is deserved or not is another debate. But if not charter schools, then something else would have come along to respond to public dissatisfaction.

Charter schools, at their best, provide a response to criticism and, in an era of choice, a viable alternative to existing schools.

Charter schools don't take away from public schools. Rather, they are a forum that strengthens our reform efforts. I admit that not all charter schools are performing this function well, but I believe that we professional educators should take the lead in applauding and encouraging this kind of reform movement.

What do we have to fear about an effort that, even at its worst, should challenge us to examine ourselves and what we are doing to improve education?

Our public teachers as a whole are doing an outstanding job. It's too bad that years of criticism have driven some of us to a defensive posture and discouraged leadership and risk-taking.

The only way that charter schools can erode public school support is if we as public educators foster the notion that the two kinds of schools cannot exist together. Then students and parents will have to choose one over the other for the wrong reasons.

In my district, the public and charter schools are supporting each other. The public school actually refers students to the charter school if that school seems to be a better match, and vice versa. We now see each other as partners.

We may be doing things differently, but, together, we believe we can provide the best possible education for all students. We know enough about each other to be able to speak honestly about each other's programs—without feeling threatened.

Public education is the backbone of our American society, and I certainly do not want to jeopardize its future.

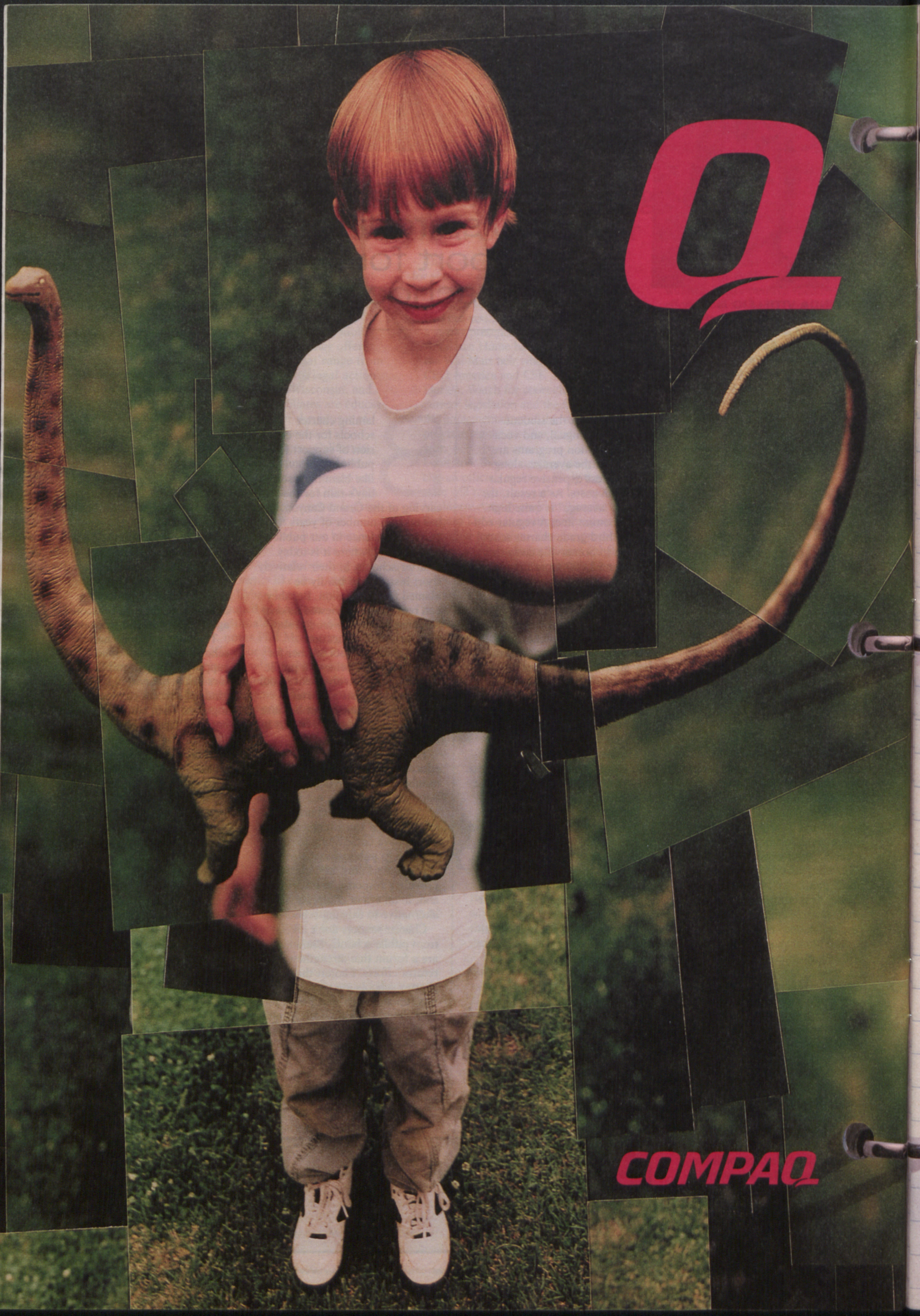
But if we deny or turn away from the need for system-wide reform—by continuing to do what we've always done—we would be doing just what we want to avoid. We would be jeopardizing the future of our public schools.

Closing our classroom doors—and hoping that the rest of the world will leave us alone—amounts to burying our heads in a sand dune that will indeed erode. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Would stronger gun control laws make schools safer?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
1% Yes **99% No**

Note: This question, posed on the *NEA Today* Web page, drew responses at unusually high levels, mostly from non-members. To vote on this month's Debate, go to www.nea.org/neatoday.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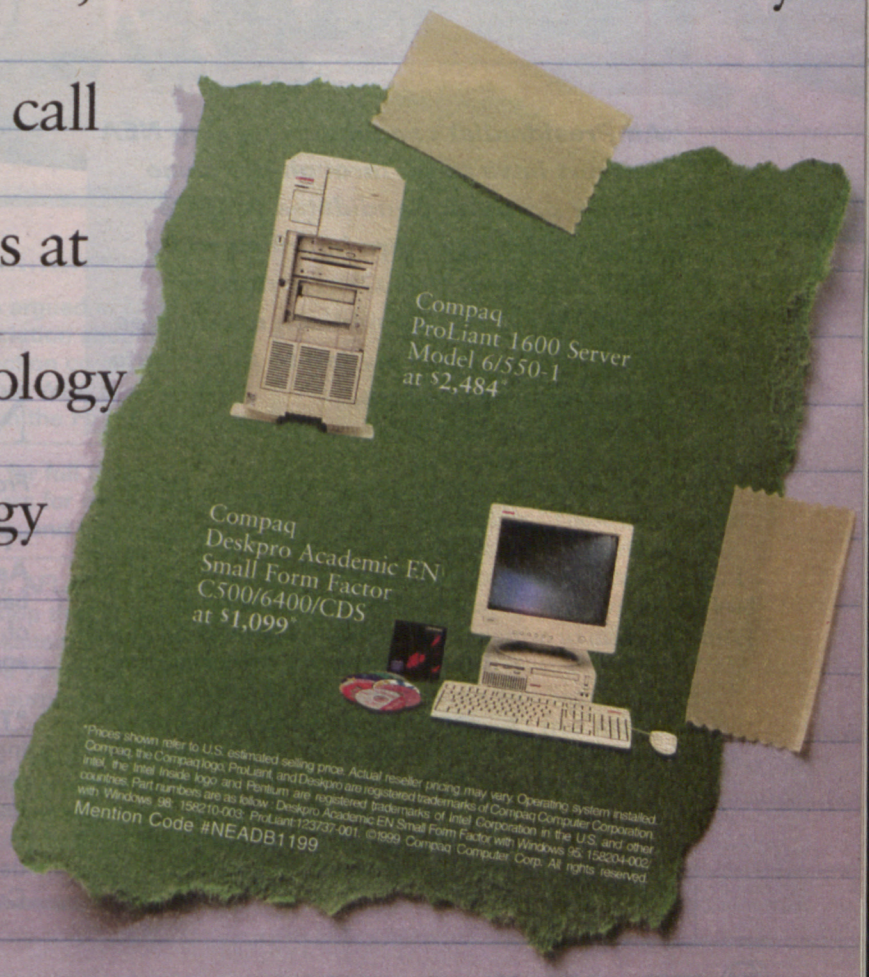
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NEA Grills the Candidates

How does NEA decide who to back in the Presidential primaries? We make hopefuls answer *lots* of questions about children and public education.

The Presidential candidate can't help but notice that NEA is obsessed with children and public schools. The candidate has just completed an 11-page Association questionnaire designed to compare the candidate's positions on education with NEA's legislative program and goals, which boil down to:

- Strengthening public education.
- Ensuring children's health and safety.
- Maximizing student learning.
- Respecting school employees.

Now, in a quest for a primary election "recommendation" from NEA, the candidate must engage in a videotaped interview with Association President Bob Chase at the NEA headquarters TV studio in Washington, D.C.

As the cameras start to roll, Chase begins the interview: "For NEA, the 2000 Presidential election is about two critical issues: children and public education. To inform our members, NEA has invited all of the major candidates to address the issues here in our studio."

Over the next 25 minutes, the candidate answers questions about children and public education. In mid-interview, the cameras stop. An NEA staffer fixes the candidate's tie.

"Our job is to make each candidate look as good as possible," technician Dave Ducey explains in the control room.

NEA staffers strive to treat each Presidential contender equally, with everything from camera placement to lighting.

"This is as fair a process as we can mount," stresses NEA political affairs manager Jack Pacheco.

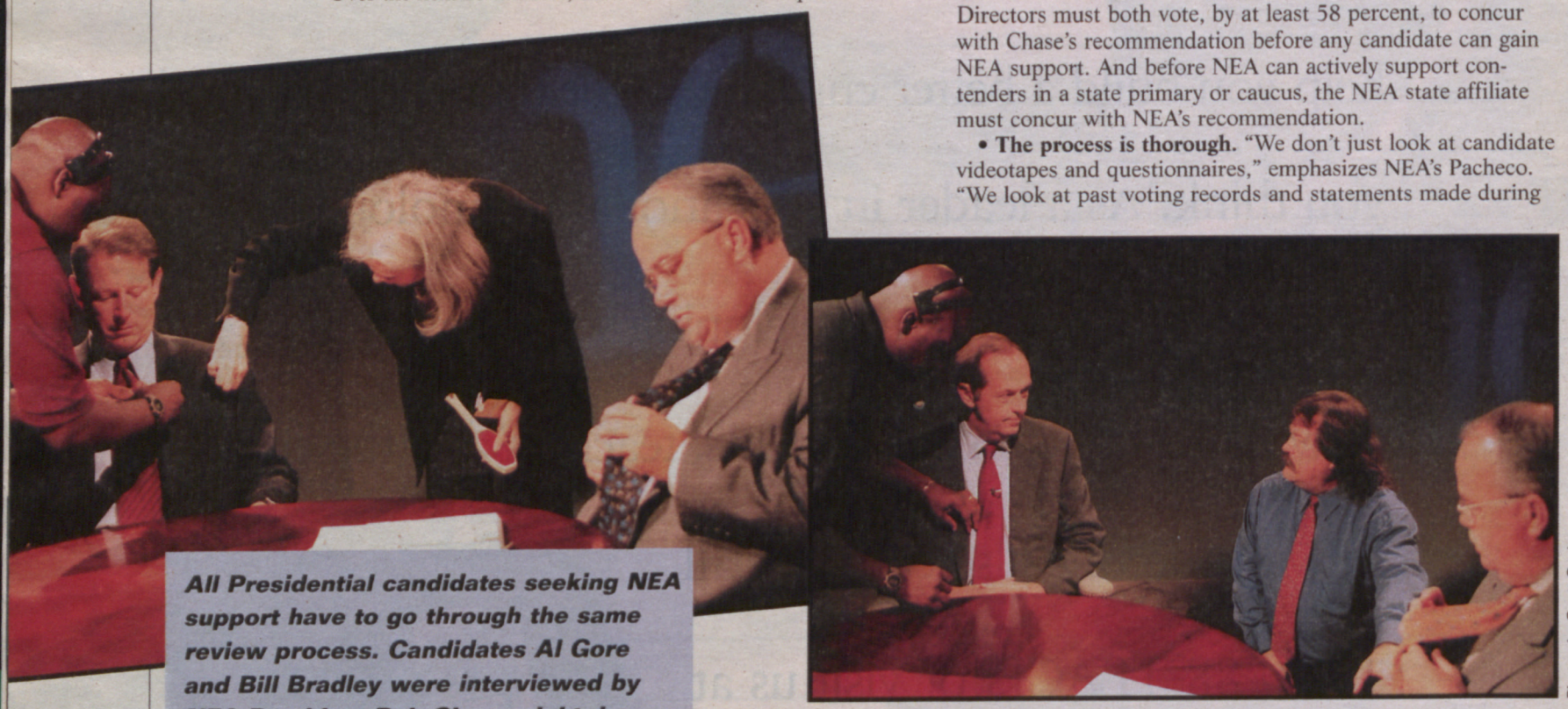
In fact, no national organization puts candidates for President through a fairer—or more rigorous—process than NEA. Some things to keep in mind:

• **NEA's candidate recommendation process is democratic.** On the basis of interviews, written questionnaires, and candidate research, NEA President Chase makes primary election recommendations to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, our Association's political action committee.

The fund is financed through the voluntary contributions of Association members. NEA does not use any dues dollars to make contributions to candidates or political parties.

The governing body of the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education and the 180-member NEA Board of Directors must both vote, by at least 58 percent, to concur with Chase's recommendation before any candidate can gain NEA support. And before NEA can actively support contenders in a state primary or caucus, the NEA state affiliate must concur with NEA's recommendation.

• **The process is thorough.** "We don't just look at candidate videotapes and questionnaires," emphasizes NEA's Pacheco. "We look at past voting records and statements made during



Photos by Scott Suchman

All Presidential candidates seeking NEA support have to go through the same review process. Candidates Al Gore and Bill Bradley were interviewed by NEA President Bob Chase, right, in September. The Republican candidates have all also been invited to participate in the review process.

News Tips Welcome

Got news with an Association connection? Be it bargaining or legislative gains, the latest in professional development, or advances in school safety, all story leads are welcome. Send your tip to neatnews@list.nea.org or fax 202/822-7206.

PRESS CLIPS

NEA Voice Heard in Both Parties

From the Indianapolis News, August 4:

"The National Education Association has no plans to pull back from its intense political activity of endorsing presidential candidates and others running for public office.

"The NEA is well known for sending the largest bloc of delegates to the Democratic National Convention every four years. What is not so well known is that it also sends a large bloc of delegates to the Republican National Convention.

"'We're not going to back away from political involvement,' NEA President Bob Chase says. 'So many decisions made about education are by those in the political process.'"

"The Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 has encouraged NEA involvement in both parties. The result was a boost in endorsements for Republican candidates for Congress in 1998. 'We have more Democrats than Republicans,' Chase notes, 'but we still have a lot of Republican members.'" ✔

the campaign. We want to make sure candidates are not saying different things to different audiences."

• **The process can move quickly.** Earlier this year, NEA asked all the major Presidential candidates, Democrats and Republicans alike, to participate in the Association's candidate review process. To be considered for support, a candidate needs to complete both steps of the process—filling out a written questionnaire and being interviewed by President Bob Chase.

"For the first time in a general election, public education will be the top issue. And nobody knows more about that issue than NEA members."

—Mary Elizabeth Teasley, NEA Government Relations Director

Vice President Al Gore and former senator Bill Bradley completed the process in September. At *NEA Today* press-time, the campaigns of Texas Governor George Bush, Senator John McCain, and former cabinet secretary Elizabeth Dole were considering whether to participate.

NEA and NEA state affiliate leaders, meanwhile, had extensive documentation on the candidates in hand by early October. As *NEA Today* went to press, they were poised to consider primary recommendations.

Why such early action? In 2000, the Presidential primaries will start earlier than ever before.

"Presidential nominees could be selected by the third week of March," points out NEA Government Relations Director Mary Elizabeth Teasley, which means that NEA members must file as early as December to have a chance at becoming convention delegates.

The 2000 election campaign, Teasley adds, is getting underway at a pivotal moment for education. Congress is now battling over proposals to cut school funding by as much as 18 percent, and the general public ranks education as the top issue by which it will measure all candidates.

"By getting involved in the caucuses and primaries," Teasley stresses, "NEA members can impact who the nominees will be. This is our chance to shape the campaign debate on the issues of children and public education." ✔

For more on the NEA candidate review process, go to www.nea.org/lac/measure/measure2.html. Candidate comparisons, based on data gathered in the review process, will appear in an upcoming *NEA Today*.

Heroes & Zeroes

Craig Kenya

▲ Sixteen-year-old student Craig Kielburger is out to end child labor through his organization, Free the Children, which boasts a membership of 5,000 and chapters in 20 countries. Kielburger, the son of two Toronto schoolteachers, has written a book based on his travels to witness the exploitation of children in Asia. For more, go to www.freethechildren.org.

▼ Think your school board is backward? The government of Ethiopia has sentenced Dr. Taye Woldesmiate, president of the Ethiopian Teachers Association, to 15 years in prison for "conspiring against the state." Woldesmiate was arrested after his union questioned aspects of government educational policy and lodged a formal claim for improved pay and conditions.

▲ We'd be plenty pleased if *Tennesseean* newspaper columnist Tim Chavez just kept writing great stuff about public education. But he also volunteers in public schools, donates time and money for projects that support at-risk kids, and partners with his wife to buy food and cook Sunday breakfast for youngsters in a Nashville public housing community.

▼ American school buildings are falling apart, classrooms are overcrowded, and there's a shortage of counselors, but never mind. Said U.S. Senate Majority Whip Don Nickles in September: "I think we should be freezing [education] spending. We should not be increasing spending." Instead, he wanted to give "flexibility" to states and districts to meet needs, without federal "dictates." Flexibility without funds, Senator?

▲ The Oklahoma Education Association has made Carol Nuss, a bus driver in the community of Noble, its 1999 ESP of the Year for a very good reason: Back in January, Nuss stepped between a vicious dog and a special education student, sustaining injuries that required many stitches and months to heal.

Report Card

NAME	GRADE	COMMENTS
Evergreen Freedom Foundation	F	This anti-public education group argued in court that the Washington Education Association should be tightly regulated as a "political action committee." But the judge disagreed, ruled that WEA is a *union*. Evergreen badly needs tutoring on the First Amendment.
Microsoft Corporation Chairman Bill Gates	A+	Gates pledges at least $1 billion for full college scholarships over the next 20 years for minority students in education, math, science, and engineering.
The AFL-CIO	A	Speaking out for those who *can't*. AFL-CIO leaders have announced a campaign to stop the purchase of medical instruments made by Pakistani children. Thousands of these kids, some as young as eight, work long hours grinding and sanding surgical equipment.
Houston (Texas) Independent School District	Come see us	Out of touch with modern prices. Finds few private schools willing to accept its $3,750 private tuition vouchers. Private schools say their students pay quite a bit *more* than that—and admitting kids for less would create, well, problems.

YOUR DUES DID IT

• **One Extraordinary Meeting:** In August, NEA convened a three-day national meeting on school safety and crisis management, pulling in teams from communities touched by school violence—from Edinboro, Pennsylvania, to Springfield, Oregon.

Says Jim Hodges, executive director of NEA's local affiliate in Jefferson County, Colorado: "These discussions were powerful. They were the first opportunity for face-to-face sharing. I was proud that NEA provided the leadership and expertise to make this meeting happen."

• **Hot News Tip:** Sign up for the *NEA Focus*, NEA's free weekly E-mail newsletter, by sending an E-mail message to lyris@list.nea.org and typing "subscribe wwwnea-announce" in the message field. ✔

The Blood Behind Those Bargains

Ever wonder if the shirt you're buying was made by a child? Retailers know, but they won't tell unless we make them.

Elementary special education teacher Kerry Clock is nagged by his conscience when he coaches soccer in Concord, New Hampshire. "I just don't know where the balls on the field came from and under what conditions they were produced," he says. "I can't help but wonder if some child in Pakistan is being denied an education because he's forced to work long hours stitching those soccer balls."

Out in Portland, Oregon, Franklin High School global studies/history teacher Bill Bigelow shares Clock's concern for the lives behind the goods we buy.

Bigelow teaches a unit on child labor. He begins by placing a soccer ball in the middle of the classroom and asks students to describe it. Their first attempt is just a bland physical description of the sphere.

Then this NEA member reads aloud Berthold Brecht's poem, "A Worker Reads History." The poem, says Bigelow, essentially "asks about the lives of people who make things we take for granted."

Next, the teacher asks kids to look at the soccer ball "more deeply" and describe it again. Suddenly, the ball's country of origin, Pakistan, takes on meaning, and several students write about who may have made the ball, and under what conditions.

"Kids are concerned about sweatshops," notes Bigelow, whose classes inspired one athlete to research the origins of soccer balls in all of Franklin High's feeder schools. "*Nobody* wants to use or wear stuff made in wretched conditions."

Least of all New Hampshire's Kerry Clock, who, as a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly in 1998, asked the over 9,500 other delegates to give an Association endorsement to the national "People's Right to Know Campaign" against child labor and sweatshops.

This drive, coordinated by two human rights organizations, the National Labor Committee and the People of Faith Network, is *not* a boycott. It's a call that asks corporations to disclose the names and addresses of factories producing the goods we buy—especially clothing and shoes—so that pay and conditions in those plants can be monitored by independent human rights or religious groups.

This disclosure won't come without a fight. Contractors for huge U.S. retailers often operate secretly in factories without signs, shielded from scrutiny by locked gates and armed security guards.

Retailers claim that factory names and addresses are "proprietary" information and that their vendor "codes of conduct" already protect workers.

The sad reality is that these codes are weak and poorly enforced.

Wal-Mart, for instance, uses its own buyers to monitor its "vendor-partner" plants and boasts that factory workers can use an 800 number to "report possible violation of Wal-Mart's vendor

"We have a relationship with people around the world each time we put on a pair of shoes or eat a banana. We need to put that relationship on an ethical standing."

—Oregon high school teacher Bill Bigelow

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I can smell a bargain at 50 paces. But I'm telling you it is no bargain to profit from the blood, sweat, and tears of children. For 130 years, NEA has fought to protect children from sweatshops and to protect the right to an education. It is a global economy, and that means we have to be global champions for children."

—NEA Executive Committee member Lily Eskelsen, at the 1998 NEA Representative Assembly

THE BOTTOM LINE

INEQUALITY: Thanks to tax cuts enacted since 1977, the nation's richest 1 percent will pay $271 billion less in taxes in 1999—$226,000 per household—than they would have if 1977 rates were still in effect. For more: www.cbpp.org/9-4-99tax-rep.htm.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY: Some 15 million young people between 16 and 24 are not currently in school, and 70 percent of them have a high school diploma or less. For more on efforts to help youth in poverty areas: www.yomovement.org.

CONFLICT: Can violence-prevention curricula make a difference? A new study shows that initiatives taught well and often—up to 25 lessons a year—can reduce aggressive behavior. For more: http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/.

CHILD CARE WORKERS: One-third of teachers in child care centers are paid the minimum wage, and, nationally, center-based child care teachers average only $7 an hour. Two-thirds of child care workers have no health insurance. For more: www.ccw.org/.

National Labor Committee

In Nicaragua, a contractor making clothing for a large U.S. retailer employs girls under the age of 16.

standards directly to Wal-Mart."

But phone calls have been few from the Bangladesh plant making Wal-Mart shirts, where vendor standards were never posted. The National Labor Committee reports that sewing machine operators there are illegally paid just $16 for a forced 80-hour workweek—$20 below the legal rate of $36.96.

These workers are denied maternity leave and health care, are harassed to meet quotas, and are forbidden from unionizing.

If any of this disturbs you, you can make a difference. Here's how to start:

• Participate in the People's Right to Know Campaign's Season of Conscience.

This holiday season, campaign organizers are applying widespread and persistent pressure on Wal-Mart, the largest U.S. retailer, to disclose the names and addresses of the factories that fill Wal-Mart's aisles. The pressure will range from letters to Wal-Mart CEO David Glass to storefront protests on Human Rights Day, December 9.

Last year, on Human Rights Day, Will Thomas, a social studies/American history teacher in Manchester, New Hampshire, leafleted a local Wal-Mart along with a retired teacher and students from Central High School's Amnesty International group.

"Some shoppers were surprised," this NEA member recalls, "that Wal-Mart sells goods produced in sweatshops with child labor. I leafleted the store because I teach children, and I'm concerned about children's welfare."

• Get your school district and municipality to adopt a full disclosure policy for the goods they buy. You can find a model procurement policy/ordinance at the National Labor Committee Web site (www.nlcnet.org).

• Encourage students to think about where products are made.

"We're all part of the human family," stresses New Hampshire teacher Will Thomas. "If children know where things are made, they'll be more concerned about their shopping habits and more concerned about child labor and the welfare of others."

"So *much* clothing is bought by young people," adds National Labor Committee staffer Margaret Gray. "It will make an impact on retailers if kids who are concerned about labels are *also* concerned about worker rights." ✔

For more on the People's Right to Know Campaign, E-mail the National Labor Committee at nlc@nlcnet.org or check www.nlcnet.org on the Web. For resources on sweatshops and globalization, go to sites of the Campaign for Labor Rights (www.summersault.com/~agj/clr/index.html) and the Network of Educators on the Americas (www.teachingforchange.org).

Facts & Figures

With $7.6 billion in annual operating profits, Wal-Mart is richer than 155 countries.

Yet contractors making clothing for Wal-Mart pay only:

- 12 cents an hour in China.
- 20 cents an hour in Bangladesh.
- 43 cents an hour in Honduras.
- $2.05 an hour in the U.S. territory of Saipan.

Source: National Labor Committee (www.nlcnet.org)

THE 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

■ **The Goal:** Modernize U.S. school buildings *and* bring down class sizes inside those buildings.

■ **Your Assignments:**

• Urge your senators to co-sponsor bill S. 1454 (lead sponsor: Chuck Robb, D-VA) and your representative to co-sponsor either H.R. 1660 (lead sponsor: Charles Rangel, D-NY) or H.R. 1760 (lead sponsor: Nancy Johnson, R-CT). Each of these bills would pay the interest costs of $25 billion in school construction and modernization bonds.

And remind House Speaker Dennis Hastert that despite bipartisan support for school modernization, the House of Representatives has *refused* to act on the will of the majority and pass this legislation. Don't forget to cite the specific needs of your school.

• Urge your members of Congress to continue the federal class size reduction program, which has funded the hiring of 30,000 new teachers this year. Inform lawmakers that if the federal government doesn't live up to its promise to expand this program to 100,000 teachers, the first 30,000 federally funded teachers could lose their jobs.

■ **Here's How:** E-mail members of Congress through NEA's Legislative Action Center at www.nea.org/lac or call them through the Capitol Switchboard at 202/224-3121. ✔

PRESCHOOL: In 1964, only 5 percent of the nation's three- and four-year-olds attended preschool. The 1997 figure: 48 percent. Over 4.5 million children are now en-rolled in preschools. For more: www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/1999/cb99-124.html.

EARNINGS: Adults with college degrees earned nearly twice as much in 1997 as adults with only high school diplomas. The college average income: $40,478. With only a high school diploma: $22,895. For more: www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb98-221.html.

ORAL HEALTH: Almost 10 percent of American kids suffer from "early childhood caries," an extreme form of tooth decay. The Oral Health America campaign is now working to increase access to dental care. For more: www.oralhealthamerica.org.

DRUGS: Slightly more than a quarter—27 percent—of secondary students used an illegal drug at least once last year. A survey of 138,079 students in grades 6 to 12 found that 5 percent of adolescents use drugs daily. For more: www.prideusa.org.

John Adams

Health aide Sarah Horton, here with students in her school's greenhouse, led the push for more ESP training.

They Lobbied As One

United with teachers, Alabama ESP win two days this year, with *pay*, for professional development.

Alabama NEA member Sarah Horton thinks it's "crazy" to hire people off the street, neglect to train them, and throw them into a classroom with kids. But that's the reality of worklife for far too many educational support personnel across the country.

"If you're working with disabled students as I do," cautions Horton, a school health aide in Mobile County, "you need to know right from wrong right up front and what the boundaries are—or you'll do something that violates the IDEA law."

Fortunately, Horton and many other Mobile ESP have had real training.

Federal Title I money helped Horton become a certified medical assistant at the Augusta Evans School for handicapped and severely and profoundly retarded students. And the Mobile County school district gives 30 consecutive hours of training to special ed aides before they enter the classroom.

Yet Horton knows she needs more schooling on the effects of medications on children. By the same token, she knows classroom aides who need training on effective discipline techniques and school custodians who need help on chemical safety issues.

That's why Horton, the president of the Alabama Education Association's 23,000-member ESP Organization, urged fellow AEA leaders earlier this year to support state funding for ESP professional development.

With the lobbying clout of their 80,000-member NEA state affiliate, Alabama school support staff made that funding happen in the 1999 legislative session. They gained two extra days for professional development—with full pay and benefit credits—for all 9-, 10-, and 11-month support employees in fiscal year 2000, which started October 1.

The new state budget funds ESP training programs conducted by qualified providers in occupation-specific skills, safety, school discipline, and "other relevant aspects of support personnel interaction with students."

Better yet, reports AEA Government Relations Director Joe Cottle, "we wrote language into the budget requiring ESP to be part of the development of their training programs."

In Mobile County, this means the

Back Talk

When they say: "Why spend so much on school support services? Let's save all the money for direct classroom expenditures."

You can say: Teachers *alone* cannot meet the many challenges presented by students today. Education support personnel provide a necessary foundation for teachers' educational goals.

Because of students' increased needs—and the expectations we have for them—the teamwork of *all* school employees is more important than ever. ESP are essential for a healthy, safe, and productive learning environment.

THE BOTTOM LINE

PRIVATIZATION: For-profit hospitals are costing taxpayers $5.2 billion more in Medicare than nonprofit hospitals, says a new report from Dartmouth Medical School researchers. For more: www.nejm.org/content/1999/0341/0006/0420.asp.

SCHOOL BUSES: Some 600 school-age children die every year in car accidents during school hours, says a new study of the 1987-1997 decade. School bus fatalities, meanwhile, average only 11 a year. For more: www.schoolbusinfo.org.

HEALTH INSURANCE: All 50 states have now created Children's Health Insurance Programs under federal legislative standards enacted in 1997. For ideas on what schools can do to get coverage to uninsured kids, check www.ed.gov/chip.

KIDS IN NEED: The number of families on welfare is down, but the number of children in "extreme poverty" is up—by 400,000 in the year after the passage of federal welfare reform. For more: www.childrensdefense.org/publications/extremepoverty.html.

"We're all-inclusive in our state Association. An ESP issue today is certainly a teacher issue tomorrow."

—Sarah Horton, school health aide

superintendent "will give us a chance to have a say in the types of professional development needed," stresses Horton.

Support staff, adds Horton, will work to change traditional approaches to providing ESP training.

"We want to have our training on days when children are not in school," she notes, "so we can give full attention to the instructors."

How did ESP in Alabama—a state without a bargaining law—win such cutting-edge training assistance? A clue or two:

• **In Alabama, teachers and ESP lobbied as one.** "We're all-inclusive in AEA," boasts Horton. "Teachers understood the need for ESP professional development, and we worked together on everybody's issues in the budget process. An ESP issue today, like job security or privatization, is certainly a teacher issue tomorrow."

During the legislative session, AEA lobbyists pushed for, and won, two new professional development days for teachers as well as ESP.

"We knew it would be easier to win this benefit if it uniformly applied to all school employees," explains Joe Cottle.

• **Association members lobbied legislators en masse.** Some 3,500 members of AEA's grassroots Legislative Contact Team met with legislators in their district offices. They won support for budget items like professional development, sick leave bank improvements, and education employee background checks.

• **Legislators heard from their hometown voters: the ESP.** "We have 1,800 members in this county, and most of them live and vote here," notes Horton, who's also president of the Mobile County ESP Organization. "Legislators know I'm not just talking to them, but to neighbors—and neighbors talk to other neighbors!" ✔

For more, fax Alabama ESP Organization's Sarah Horton at 334/471-2942.

Do'ers Profile

Kyle Brehm

KAREN MOSES

■ ***Name and profession:*** Karen Moses, hall monitor

■ ***NEA local affiliate:*** Billings (Montana) Classified Employees Association

■ ***Extracurricular activity:*** Negotiating committee member

■ ***Latest accomplishment:*** When Moses was local president last year, Billings ESP needed a decent raise. More than half worked in positions with starting pay of $6.07 an hour or less, and health premiums were eating up take-home pay.

With support from teacher members of the Billings Education Association, Moses and her 450 members waged a 10-month campaign for a new contract. They packed school board meetings, displayed blow-ups of their paltry paychecks, and passed out flyers with graphs and statistics on their pay and benefits.

The payoff: a three-year contract with a 47-cent-an-hour raise for special ed assistants, a 33-cent raise for other ESP, benefit eligibility for combined part-time hours, reclassification of several jobs, and a new reclassification committee to tackle the rest.

■ ***Words of wisdom:*** "In these battles, you need to enlist the help of teachers and other groups. Gather facts, show what a *living wage* is, talk about the danger of losing quality people, and invite school board members into buildings to see the value of ESP jobs." ✔

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

School Carpeting: What's Under the Rug

As a school employee, you expect to enjoy rights like due process and respect on the job. But have you considered the right to breathe unpolluted air?

We're not just talking about proper ventilation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cautions that indoor carpeting can harbor some pretty ugly stuff:

• A water problem that keeps carpeting damp can create a primary site for **microbial growth**, with frequent adverse health effects. And wet carpeting is an ideal breeding ground for two allergens: **mold and mildew**. Carpet with significant water damage should be removed, says the EPA, and either discarded or steam cleaned and fully dried.

• A carpet acts like a filter for **particulates and pollutants**, trapping everything from lawn pesticides to volatile organic compounds. Frequent and effective vacuuming can reduce such accumulations, but not even hot-water extraction can eliminate them all. Dust from improper carpet cleaning, especially vacuuming without a high-efficiency filter, can be a nightmare for people with asthma or allergies.

• Carpets are an ideal environment for **dust mites**, which consume flakes of dead human skin and leave highly allergenic excrement. A waxed floor sounds better all the time. ✔

KUDOS TO. . .

Solidarity in Omaha!

■ **Teacher members of the Omaha (Nebraska) Education Association,** working without a contract since last spring, rallied September 20 before the school board and won huge press coverage. Showing solidarity at the 1,500-person event: community folks and ESP represented by SEIU Local 226.

■ After 15 months of bargaining and a two-day strike, **members of the Alum Rock (California) Educators Association/CTA** have ratified a contract that provides a 12 percent salary increase over three years and institutes this elementary district's first-ever teacher preparation periods.

■ In a First Amendment case, the **Maine Education Association** has won a jury award of $150,000 for a probationary elementary teacher fired because she expressed "real concern" over student safety, after observing violent behavior by her principal. This case, says the MEA attorney, was about "clearing the good name" of the teacher and "sending a message to area districts" about her fitness as an educator.

■ **Gary McGowen**, president of the Oyster River (New Hampshire) ESP Association, looked over his new job description and found language that would have reclassified him and three other head custodians as supervisors, stripping them of union rights. NEA-New Hampshire reps quickly helped McGowen write new language, later approved by the district, protecting the union status of head custodians. ✔

QUALITY TIME: America's teens are three times more likely to rely solely on their mothers than their fathers when they're making key decisions, says a new study. For more: www.casacolumbia.org/newsletter1457/newsletter_show.htm?doc_id=17257.

SAFE SEATS: New federal regulations on forward-facing children's car seats have been in effect since September 1. Families can now buy a kit to bring their seats up to standards for $20. For more: www.saferidenews.com/srntethers.html#better.

CYBERSPACE: Hispanic and Black households remain woefully underrepresented on the Internet. The two groups represent about one in five American households, but only one of 10 online. For more: www.benton.org/Digital Beat/db080699.html.

COLA CONTRACTS: School officials in Madison, Wisconsin, one of the nation's first districts to give a cola company exclusive sales rights, are going to let their $300,000 contract with Coke expire this December. For more: www.commercialfree.org.

RIGHTS WATCH

Affirmative Action Under Attack

Efforts to ensure student diversity through affirmative action are being challenged in court. Diversity's losing.

Is it legal for school districts to consider a student's race when making admission, assignment, and transfer decisions?

The answer is "yes," if the district has been found guilty of discrimination and is under a desegregation order. Affirmative action of this sort is considered a lawful remedy for past discrimination.

But what if the district has attained "unitary" status and has been released from federal court oversight and ongoing desegregation orders?

Many of these districts, as well as others that never discriminated, have adopted voluntary affirmative action plans to ensure racially diverse student bodies, particularly in specialized, selective schools, such as magnet or "examination" schools.

And that's led to a spate of lawsuits by nonminority students claiming "reverse" discrimination. Granting preferences to minority students, these students argue, violates their right to Equal Protection under the laws.

School districts counter that these policies are legally justified because of the proven educational benefits that flow from racially diverse student bodies. The courts—for the most part—have rebuffed this argument.

In Boston last year, the First Circuit Court of Appeals struck down an affirmative action student admissions policy for the prestigious Boston Latin School.

In September, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a race-based lottery system for admission to a special magnet elementary school in Arlington, Virginia, violates the Constitution.

In Rochester, New York, earlier this year, a federal court struck down an interdistrict school transfer program that permitted minority students, but not white students, to transfer from inner city to suburban schools.

In Akron, Ohio, a federal court reached the same conclusion in a 1996 case.

The San Francisco School District last February agreed to settle a federal lawsuit by abandoning race-based considerations in student admissions decisions.

Still pending is a federal court lawsuit against the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools challenging an affirmative action admissions program for a "gifted and talented" school.

On the other side, a Maryland federal court last year upheld Montgomery County's policy to deny elementary student transfer requests when the transfer will adversely affect the school's racial balance. That case is now on appeal.

And, in September, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a race-based admissions policy for a special, experimental, research-oriented elementary school run by a California university. Because the school was created to conduct research into innovative teaching techniques, the court ruled, the need for a "laboratory environment" justified the race-conscious admissions policy.

Most courts are saying that schools need to have a "compelling state interest" to justify a race-based admission or transfer policy, and the need for racial diversity is not "compelling" enough.

Evidence suggests that a racially diverse student body "promotes racial tolerance and improves academic performance."

But there is strong evidence that a racially diverse student body does produce demonstrable educational benefits.

At the direction of the NEA Executive Committee, the NEA general counsel earlier this year prepared a paper reviewing the results of some 30 published research studies on this issue.

The paper, now available on the NEA Web page, concludes that there is a "substantial body of empirical evidence" that a racially diverse student body "promotes racial tolerance, improves academic performance, breaks down barriers among individuals of different races, and contributes to the robust exchange of ideas."

The Supreme Court hasn't tackled this issue yet, but, given the multitude of pending cases, it's only a matter of time before the Court decides whether this "empirical evidence" is sufficient.

Meanwhile, delegates to the 1999 NEA Representative Assembly in July adopted a new resolution voicing the Association's support of affirmative action for purposes of ensuring student racial diversity. ✔

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

"Privilege," SAT Scores, and "Strivers"

Affirmative action in higher education student admissions continues to spark wide debate. It's been outlawed by ballot initiatives in California and Washington State and by court decision in Texas. And lawsuits against state universities are still pending in Michigan and Georgia.

But the NAACP recently went on the offensive. The civil rights organization last February filed an innovative lawsuit against the University of California at Berkeley, charging that the school's admissions policies—which rely heavily on whether applicants have taken honors and advanced-placement classes— discriminate against minorities.

AP and similar honors courses are not offered in many high schools with mostly minority enrollments, the lawsuit alleges. Rewarding applicants "simply because of where they attend high school doesn't reward merit, it rewards privilege," argued the NAACP's Kimberly West-Faulcon.

One of the criticisms long leveled at the Scholastic Aptitude Test is that it simply tests socioeconomic status and rewards privilege. Data show that SAT scores correlate closely with parental education and income.

In an effort to level the playing field, the Educational Testing Service is considering a new method for using SAT scores to identify and reward "overachieving" students, called "Strivers." A student's test scores would be compared to others of similar race, family income, and education, as well as several other factors. Those who substantially outscored their peers could then receive special consideration in college admissions.

THE BOTTOM LINE

DIVERSITY: The number of Hispanics nationally has risen 35 percent since 1990, according to Census Bureau calculations for 1998. About one in 10 U.S. residents is now foreign-born. For more: www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/us_nativity.html.

COLLEGE STUDENTS: With more high school students taking college prep courses than ever before, colleges in the nation's largest state, California, are predicting a 36 percent enrollment rise over the next 10 years. For more: www.ccche.org/index.shtml.

TESTING: One of the nation's top test companies, CTB/McGraw-Hill, last spring misreported reading and math scores for thousands of New York City students. The faulty scores determined summer school attendance. For more: www.fairtest.org/index.htm.

PRIVACY: An analysis of 80 popular children's commercial Web sites shows that nearly 90 percent of them collect personal information from kids. But only 25 percent attempt to first get parental permission before collecting data. For more: www.cme.org.

INTERVIEW

Gloria Tristani
On the E-rate, V-Chip

Half the nation's classrooms still aren't connected to the Internet. Additional E-rate funding, notes the FCC's Gloria Tristani, will help the have-nots close the cyberspace gap.

Paul Tañedo

Late last spring, the five members of the Federal Communications Commission met to determine how much funding schools would get this coming year via the E-rate, the federal program that provides deep discounts to connect schools to the Internet. One by one, in a packed hearing room, the five FCC commissioners announced whether they would support or oppose increasing E-rate funding by nearly a billion dollars.

With two votes for and two against, the outcome now hinged on the fifth and final FCC commissioner, Gloria Tristani. In a dramatic moment, Tristani tossed away her prepared remarks and, speaking from the heart, gave the billion-dollar increase her resounding support. Tristani later explained why to *NEA Today's* Anita Merina.

Q: What made you throw away your prepared statement during the E-rate funding debate?
I was responding to comments from one of the commissioners opposed to the increase. He felt that becoming computer savvy and getting school access to technology isn't critically important for all children—because they could always find ways to get the technology someplace else. That was it for me. So I talked about my grandfather, who left school in seventh grade, but then educated himself by reading at the public library. He was extraordinary. But everyone can't make it like that. Most children need all the help and tools that they can get. And we have to make sure the tools are there. Every child deserves an equal chance at success.

Q: What's the current status of E-rate funding?
We have funded the E-rate for this current year at $2.25 billion. That's a lot of money, but there are some who believe this country spends too much on education programs. I just believe that we need to give all of our children a chance and put them on an equal playing field. That's a term I hear a lot about in business. Well, our children need to be on an equal playing field.

Q: Your vote to increase E-rate funding will give all schools a discount on Internet access fees—and get dollars for internal wiring to many more schools than last year. Did educators play a role in your decision?
Educators were extremely important, because the E-rate has been a very contentious program. When NEA members around the nation began writing, not just to me, but to members of Congress, that made a big difference. I also traveled to schools around the country. When I visited Hayes Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, my home state, a special ed teacher told me how the technology in her school changed her students' attitude from "I can't do well," to "I can do anything!" That's a very special feeling. I've also visited schools in Maryland, New Mexico, and Puerto Rico. I've seen how the E-rate is helping schools get connected to the Internet.

Q: What can educators do to support the E-rate?
Please continue to lobby and support us. It's very important that you be vocal with your congressional representatives and with the FCC. We can't let down our guard for a minute. The E-rate, remember, isn't just about wiring schools, it's about wiring classrooms. Our children need this technology, not just to communicate, but to learn job skills for the future.

Q: The Internet also poses risks. There are pornographic Web sites and hate Web sites. What's the FCC doing about Internet safety?
We try to be helpful by providing as much information as possible to schools, libraries, and parents about strategies for safeguarding children from the evils of the Internet. Here at the FCC, we have dedicated a portion of our Web site to Internet filtering information, resources, and software information.

We're not censors. It's really important that parents take responsibility by asking "What's my kid doing on the Internet?" As for schools, it's important that they have a sound policy. You have to be vigilant, for while we all value our First Amendment rights and the freedom of the Internet, we have to be very careful about safeguarding kids.

Q: You're also closely involved with the V-Chip. What exactly is this?
The V-Chip is technology built into TV sets that "reads" the ratings for a particular TV program. Once you decide which TV ratings are inappropriate for your children, you can use the V-Chip to block out programs with these ratings.

Q: What's the status of the V-Chip program?
The V-Chip is currently available on half of all the television models being sold. By January 1, the V-Chip will be on every new model bigger than 13 inches, 95 percent of all sets sold.

Q: Does turning a TV on activate the V-Chip?
The V-Chip won't operate unless you select the option of activating it. That's why our public education campaign for parents is so important. Parents need to understand that this is yet another tool to help them.

Q: Critics liken the V-Chip to censorship. Is it?
The V-Chip is not about flat censorship. This is about parents in their home deciding whether they want to monitor what their children are watching and create better choices. The Kaiser Foundation did a survey recently. Some 77 percent of parents said they'd use a V-Chip if it were there. But if people don't know it's there, they won't use it. And if the V-Chip doesn't catch on, it may die. We've been trying to encourage others to set an example. ✔

RESOURCES

- To learn more about the E-rate, V-Chip, and the FCC, check the FCC Web site at www.fcc.gov.
- For more on the E-rate, go to the Education and Library Network Coalition (EdLiNC) Web site. EdLiNC has designed an E-rate hotline Web site loaded with information and application guidelines. Go www.eratehotline.org.
- You can find more information on the V-Chip in *A Parent's Guide to the TV Ratings and V-Chip*, a publication from the Center for Media Education and the Kaiser Family Foundation. Call 877/2-VCHIP-TV. You can also get information on the V-Chip by calling 888/CALL-FCC, or access the World Wide Web at: www.fcc.gov/vchip/.

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Under 30	$1.20	50-54	$6.96
30-34	$1.56	55-59	$10.56
35-39	$2.16	60-64	$16.44
40-44	$3.24	65-69	$25.92
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*Your fixed monthly rate is based on age at enrollment. This rate is guaranteed to stay the same until your coverage ends.

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**Savings varies with age. 56% is based on annual premium if enrolling at age 69.

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About you

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Date of birth ___/___/___ Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female Phone (___) _____ Social Security No. ___-___-___

About your coverage

I select the following payment option:

1. ☐ Bill me directly 2. ☐ MasterCard® ☐ Visa® Card Account # _____ Expires** _____

3. ☐ Electronic Funds Transfer Service (EFTS). I authorize Prudential to debit my checking account for payments for NEA Life Insurance. The bank named here is authorized to debit the account for such entries.

Bank _____ Phone # _____ Transit Routing # (the first 9 numbers that appear on check) _____ Account # _____

I select one of the following customized billing options: ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Semi-Annually ☐ Annually

About your beneficiary

Please designate your beneficiary. (Example: Mary A. Doe, sister, NOT Mrs. John Doe, sister.) Note: Your estate will be named if no beneficiary is designated.

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____ Relationship _____

Address of Beneficiary _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

About your health§

1. I am now physically able to perform all the duties of my occupation and I am working in full compliance with the terms of my contract. (Select one) ☐ True ☐ False

☐ Not applicable – I am either a Student, Substitute, Retired or Active member who has been involuntarily terminated by a school board as a result of a reduction in force.

2. Have you ever had, been treated for, or been diagnosed by a doctor as having any of the following conditions:

	Yes	No
a. Heart or other circulatory disorder	☐	☐
b. Cancer	☐	☐
c. Tumor	☐	☐
d. High blood pressure	☐	☐
e. Lung disorder	☐	☐
f. Nervous system or mental disorder	☐	☐
g. Ulcers or stomach disorder	☐	☐
h. Intestine or kidney disorder	☐	☐
i. Liver disorder or gallstones	☐	☐
j. Pleurisy or asthma	☐	☐
k. Spinal disorders	☐	☐
l. Diabetes	☐	☐
m. Immune system disorder or a blood disorder (such as human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome [AIDS] or AIDS-related complex [ARC])	☐	☐
n. Other immune system disorder (such as lupus)	☐	☐

3. In addition, during the last five months I have not been confined in a hospital or other institution due to illness. ☐ True ☐ False

Your signature

I declare by signing this form that all the information I have provided is complete and true, and understand that it is the basis of providing insurance under a contract(s) issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America to NEA Members Insurance Trust. This insurance is underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. I certify by signing this Enrollment Form that I am currently an Active, Educational Support, Life, Reserve, Retired, Student, Substitute, or Staff member in good standing of the National Education Association.

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*Your monthly rate is based upon age at enrollment. Please verify this information on the rate chart at left. **This credit card payment option is currently not available in the following states: AL, CT, DC, FL, HI, KS, MD, MS, NC, NH and OH.

§Approval of your enrollment is subject to the answers to the questions about your health. In 1998, 95.1% of all enrollment forms were approved. *1998 year end Prudential report for the NEA.*

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Learning

Awareness: The Key to HIV/AIDS Education

It's not always easy to convince communities about the importance of HIV/AIDS education. Just ask this South Carolina educator.

Jennifer Rotenizer

Back in the early years of the AIDS epidemic, South Carolina special education teacher **Phillip Armstrong** discovered that his school district had no formal HIV/AIDS awareness program. He was appalled.

"It used to be that one teenager contracted the AIDS virus every two hours. Now it's doubled to one teenager every hour, every day," says Armstrong, a Myrtle Beach educator who became interested in HIV/AIDS education when a colleague's brother was diagnosed with the disease.

"We have to educate," says Armstrong, "by teaching students the facts about AIDS and its prevention."

Since 1993, Armstrong has made it his mission to teach youth those facts, with heartening results.

Armstrong's efforts first hit critical mass when, with help from the Horry County Education Association, he won a grant and state approval to implement a "Get Real About AIDS" education program for all local secondary students.

Armstrong then created "Heart to Heart," a program adapted from Red Cross materials that helps students become HIV/AIDS peer educators.

Doing this work in an arguably conservative county and state hasn't always been easy. In 1997, as a member of the South Carolina textbook adoption committee, Armstrong faced stiff opposition from committee members who didn't want AIDS taught in public schools.

But Armstrong prevailed, in the process guaranteeing that state textbooks contain accurate HIV/AIDS information.

Impact:

More than 15,000 middle and high school students in Horry County have participated in the "Get Real About AIDS" program. And, in July, the NEA Health Information Network presented Armstrong with the Ryan White Memorial HIV Education Award, which included $500 to help him continue his work.

For More:

E-mail Phillip Armstrong at parmst1025@aol.com. ✔

Trends

What's the best way to focus public attention on school resource inequalities? One idea from the Rainbow-PUSH Coalition: Help students see where the "other half" learns.

The group recently organized a day-long exchange between students from an inner-city neighborhood and a well-off suburb. What students saw was unsettling.

Harper High on Chicago's South Side has peeling paint, virtually no science equipment, and a dilapidated gym. Neuqua Valley in nearby Naperville sported three new gyms, elaborate science labs, and lavishly appointed computer centers.

Spreading Dance into Schools

Innovator: Tina Ramirez

Job: Founder of Ballet Hispanico, the nation's pre-eminent Hispanic-American dance company and school, and creator of "Primeros Pasos" (First Steps), a national arts education program offered to public schools nationwide.

Bright Idea:

Sharing Hispanic culture through dance has been part of Ballet Hispanico's mission since 1970. But the ballet company's education component didn't begin until three years later, when Ramirez began offering mini-performances and workshops to schools.

"I wanted people to know Hispanics better and to like us," she says.

Her program, says Ramirez, who is Puerto Rican, aims to "teach children that there is another world beyond theirs and that dancing is part of life."

Through "Primeros Pasos," Ramirez passes on her love of dance to students while helping them learn core subjects. Math students, for example, learn abstract patterns, spatial and timing configurations, and how to count to music.

"They learn rhythm," she says, "and how to listen."

Ramirez, who won a 1999 Hispanic Heritage Award this fall, also works with teachers to design curriculum.

One example: "Viva Las Americas," a lecture demonstration for elementary schools that teaches students about the cultures of Latin American countries through such dances as Mexico's folklorico, Brazil's samba, and Honduras's punta.

In "Crossing Borders," a unit for 7th through 12th graders, students attend miniperformances to learn various aspects of the Hispanic experience—seeing the world, for instance, through the eyes of a struggling immigrant.

"They learn not just from books, but they feel it in their bodies," Ramirez says. "They'll remember those lessons forever."

Impact:

"Primeros Pasos"—offered to 25,000 students and teachers across the country each year—has touched the lives of more than half a million students. And, Ramirez notes, it's inspired others to become professional dancers.

For more:

Contact info@ballethispanico.org or call 212/362-6710. ✔

Paras Find Power in Pickett

Leo Sorel

With today's shortage of teachers, paraeducators are in more demand than ever, but they're too often underrecognized, undertrained, underutilized, and underpaid. Anna Lou Pickett is trying to remedy this situation.

As director of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services at the Center for Advanced Study in Education at the City University of New York, Pickett and her colleagues recently produced a report that offers state and local education agencies guidelines and resources for setting standards for the roles, supervision, and training of paraeducators.

What paraprofessional development is now available?
Only 12 states have certification systems for paraeducators, and another 12 have standards or guidelines to employ or train them.

Of those 24 states, only three or four recognize paraeducators' changing and expanding roles.

To become effective contributors to improving the quality of education for all learners, paraeducators have to be trained and their multifaceted roles appreciated. People who have a stake in this matter must set the standards and determine the competencies required for paraeducators.

Who can validate the roles of paraeducators and enhance their status?
That's the responsibility of state and local education agencies in cooperation with unions, professional organizations, and colleges. Together, they can determine the roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraeducators and identify their respective distinctions. Policy and decision makers just aren't confronting the issue.

Why aren't they?
Throughout the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, very little attention was paid to policy questions and systemic issues that affect the utilization, supervision, and preparation of paraeducators.

Things are beginning to change, because there is a growing awareness among policy makers at all levels about the need to develop standards and programs to ensure that paraeducators have the skills needed to be effective team members.

There's also increasing recognition that teachers also need to be trained to work with paraeducators. We still have a long way to go, but we are making progress.

What are some strategies for improving the teacher-paraeducator team?
Paraeducators need systematic, competency-based training, and teachers need to be prepared for their new role as classroom supervisors. School administrators also must provide in-service paraprofessional training and collaborate with colleges to offer opportunities for the advancement of paraeducators into teacher ranks.

School officials should also ensure that teachers and paraeducators have time to meet on a regular basis to plan activities and exchange information. If teachers and paraeducators communicate well and routinely, they usually will have a more positive impact on student achievement. ✔

For More:
For the report, *Strategies for Developing and Maintaining Effective Teacher-Paraeducator Teams,* contact Pickett at 212/817-1832 or at apickett@gc.cuny.edu.

Testing and Urban Kids

Innovator: Clifford Hill, Ph.D.

Job:
Hill is the Arthur I. Gates Professor of Language and Education at Columbia University Teachers College in New York City. He also directs the Program in African Languages at Columbia's Institute of African Studies.

Bright Idea:
For the past 20 years, Hill and his Teachers College doctoral students—from multicultural backgrounds—have been analyzing student responses to standardized tests, particularly reading tests.

"We are bothered by the model of literacy testmakers use," says Hill. "What we have found over the years is a pattern—the right answer is low level, like defining a word or recycling some information. It's not challenging and it's pretty boring."

The "distractors," or wrong answers, notes Hill, actually "invite kids to be more creative."

According to Hill's research, children from nonmainstream cultural backgrounds are more frequently attracted to distractors and give logical reasons for their choices.

"This old mechanical model of literacy does not do justice to the complex way people really read," says Hill, whose subjects talk into a tape recorder while taking tests, allowing researchers to analyze their thinking processes.

"Standardized tests in general tend to dumb down the curriculum, but the problem is more severe with reading tests," says Hill. "They don't give a true picture."

Leo Sorel

Hill wants to see a more comprehensive approach.

"Conventional testing is based upon a 19th century model," says Hill. "It's out of touch with our knowledge of how people learn."

Hill also argues that students aren't given enough time to adequately assess.

"If we shift into an alternative mode, we've got to let go of that 40-minute frame," says Hill, a research fellow at the U.S. Department of Education last year.

Hill recently wrote a report for College Board testmakers, who want to develop new ways of assessing students.

"Instead of everything revolving around the printed language," he points out, "you can use multimedia, movies, speech, and writing."

Impact:
Hill and his colleagues helped teachers in the New York area develop alternative assessment models. Students compile portfolios and don't take multiple-choice tests. Tests are also less time driven, giving students a chance to make inferences and give richer, more constructive responses. ✔

For More:
To contact Hill, E-mail cah34@columbia.edu. His new book, *Children and Reading Tests,* co-authored with Eric Larsen, is available from Ablex Press by calling 800/398-9985 or 203/323-9606.

NEA Innovators

When the Safe Schools Coalition holds its Second Joint National School/Community Conference on Youth Violence and Substance Abuse on November 18-20, NEA staffer LaMar Haynes will be at the helm. Presiding over conferences is just one of his duties as the group's new president.

"Protecting our children from violence and providing all children the opportunity to learn and grow free from fear is a top priority for NEA and the sole mission of this coalition," says Haynes, currently a special projects director at the Association, where he has worked since 1975.

About 500 people from different backgrounds are expected to attend the November conference. For more information, call 800/537-4903 or visit www.ed.mtu.edu/safe.

Growing Literate in the Literacy Garden

Roosevelt-Perry Elementary in Louisville combines the great outdoors with great literature—and the kids love it.

Few of the inner-city students at Roosevelt-Perry Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky, had ever laid eyes on a garden, much less enjoyed one, until last year.

That's when local students and their teachers created, right in front of their school, a 230-foot-long "Literacy Garden," a peaceful, yet stimulating, environment designed to motivate students to read.

The new garden, says Janis Lowe, the resource teacher who originated the project, is giving students the chance to "cultivate their gardens," both literally and in the literary sense.

The garden's 12 plots, Lowe points out, each illustrate the theme of a popular children's book. The Wizard of Oz Garden, for instance, features a path of yellow bricks—laid by the children.

Over in the Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory Garden, mint plants grow in abundance, while clematis vines climb up the 12-foot-high arches that overlook the Secret Garden.

In the Fairy Tale Garden, "enchanted" concrete benches are shaped like bunnies and squirrels, and large, irregular-shaped concrete walking stones look like slices of tree trunks for children to dance over. Students landscaped other gardens with ornamental grasses, daylilies, and black-eyed Susans.

Paul Schuhmann

First grader Kevon Dunbar takes a break from reading and drawing in the Literacy Garden to talk with computer resource teacher Janis Lowe.

Children at every grade level of the school—considered among the poorest in Kentucky—helped create the special plots.

"This project allowed us to blend science, art, and reading," says Lowe.

Students, for instance, learned the difference between dirt versus living soil—by digging the earth up, having it tested, and learning what it needed to be fertile.

The students also made suggestions on how to make each garden pretty and more representative of each book's theme. They learned which plants grow in shade and which require more sun. They planted seeds, laid bricks, weeded and watered their gardens.

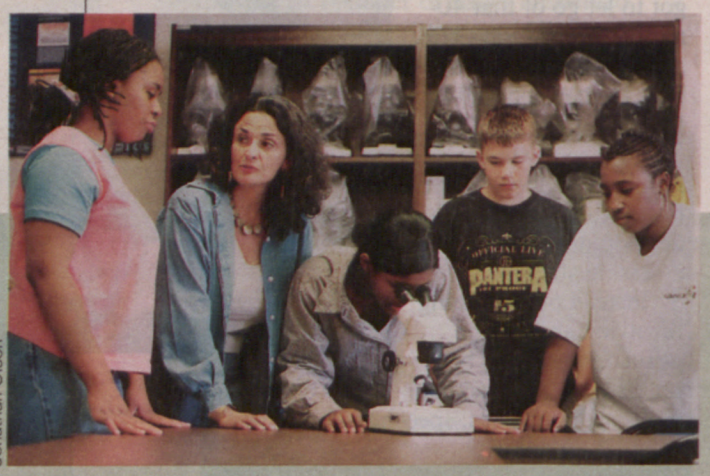
Other students painted pictures on tiles that were later attached to panels and mounted onto one of the school walls to form a 24-foot-high mural.

Several factors inspired the Literacy Garden. One, says Lowe, was her school's focus on literacy.

Another was a student comment that still haunts Lowe even today. One of Lowe's colleagues had suggested to a student that she learn her multiplication tables while sitting under a tree.

"But I don't got no trees," the 4th grader politely replied.

Lowe put that anecdote in a proposal for a $2,500 Fred Wiche School Gardening Award—named for a local



Jonathan Olson

How I Did It

Julia Arab Rankin
Program Director
Harris AgriScience & Tech Center
Bloomfield, Connecticut

Sustained interracial interaction has always been an emphasis of mine, and I thought nothing could encourage team-building more than an intensive multi-district salmon restoration project.

I applied for and was awarded a state Department of Education grant that allowed me to launch the interdistrict "River to Sea" program.

This year is our fourth and biggest year. About 150 high school and 320 middle school students—from 15 schools in nine districts—will participate in the year-long project.

Participants work together in teams via video-conferencing and monthly gatherings. At the beginning of the school year, high school students go camping and canoeing and participate in a ropes course to build teamwork.

These exercises also give students from varying backgrounds an opportunity to get comfortable working closely together.

During the first half of the year, we learn about marine ecology and aquaculture. High school students go to middle schools to mentor younger participants. Students also conduct water-quality tests, visit a salmon hatchery, prepare data analysis, and start raising salmon eggs in classroom tanks.

Students attending "Salmon Saturdays," which are optional, learn fly-fishing and build a 15-foot skiff.

In the spring, students release the salmon into our local river, which leads into the Atlantic Ocean. At the end of the year, they use technology to present what they've learned. And many participants form lasting friendships with students they may not have otherwise met.

radio/TV celebrity. She ended up beating out proposals from 26 other schools, and the University of Louisville provided matching funds, which helped the school hire a scientist-in-residence to oversee the project.

Other community organizations and businesses also helped develop the garden. The local ironworkers union donated iron rebars and bent and mounted them to form the arches now over the Secret Garden.

Several nurseries provided plants at no cost. A local tile layer grouted and adhered the tiles to panels for the outdoor mural. And the school system contributed mulch to the project.

"Children and parents love this garden, and they use it," says Sharon Erny, who teaches first grade. "The students like to read in the garden and walk through it, and they've taken ownership of it, telling us when the garden needs weeding and watering."

It's too early to know if the garden has helped boost reading scores, but the garden has clearly become a place that children take pride in, a place to grow their self-esteem.

"That," says Lowe, "can only help with all their academics!" ✔

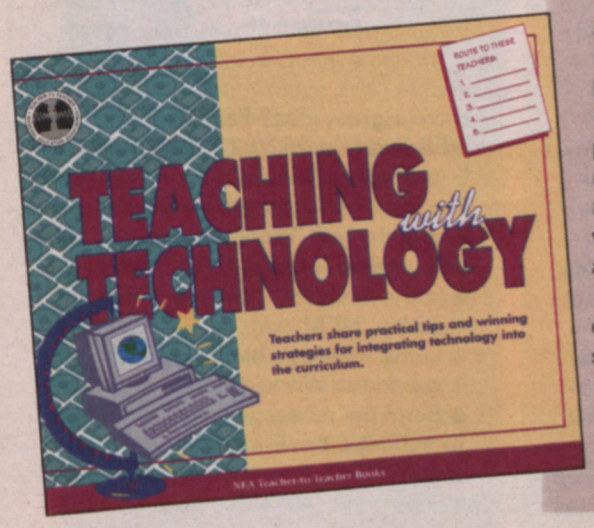
For More Information:
Contact Lowe at jlowe1@jefferson.k12.ky.us. You can find out more about the Literacy Garden and other projects in *Teaching with Technology*. Read this NEA Professional Library book free online at www.nea.org/books or order by calling 800/229-4200 (Item #2915-1-00-F, $9.95 for members).

Recommended Resources

Carr, Janine Chappell. *A Child Went Forth: Reflective Teaching with Young Readers and Writers* (Heinemann, 1999).

English, Evelyn Williams. *Gift of Literacy for the Multiple Intelligences Classroom* (SkyLight, 1999).

Finn, Patrick J. *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest* (State University of New York, 1999).


TEACHING with TECHNOLOGY
Teachers share practical tips and winning strategies for integrating technology into the curriculum.
NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books

[DILEMMA]

How do you get the class rolling while dealing with stallers, absentees, and announcements?

I begin every class with a "QuickWrite" or a "QuickReview." In a QuickWrite, I pose a question on an issue and give students about three to five minutes to write their responses. Students know that their responses are not judged on style or content, but only on their willingness to share their thoughts with me.

In situations involving sensitive subjects—such as drugs or human sexuality—students can submit anonymous responses. They understand that they will receive credit for the assignment based upon their attendance in class and that I do not allow anyone else to read their responses.

More often, I warm up my students for class with a QuickReview, which directs them to take three minutes to review prior reading or notes.

Both methods allow me to take attendance, check homework, and have a quick word with stragglers about why they were late.

Dan Reynolds
High school social studies teacher
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

■ In my third grade, I always have a writing-page assignment on the board that is due every morning after breakfast. I no longer have a problem getting students working, because they automatically do this on their own. Students who are tardy also know that their assignments must be completed before recess.

Pam Piziak
Third grade teacher
Beckley, West Virginia

■ In order to get class started, I follow a few simple procedures that help me maintain my sanity and are also helpful for the students.

When students enter the room, they look for my instructions—posted on the board—for the first five minutes of class. I expect them to begin working on them, quietly, as soon as they arrive.

Below the board is a small table with trays for handouts. On the way to their seats, students also pick up any necessary papers—including those to be used later in the period—and begin. This alone saves lots of time and gives students something to do right away.

Students who have been absent and are returning to class go to the "make-up board." Next to the board is a set of folders, marked "Monday-Friday," that contain papers associated with work they missed. I also have paper trays marked for turning in make-up work, miscellaneous papers, and assignments that are due.

These procedures are very effective in getting class off to a smooth and productive start. I can easily deal with attendance or speak to individual students as needed during this time.

Doug Cooper
High school government and economics teacher
Wilmington, Ohio

■ The problem is not so much how to deal with stallers, absentees, and announcements, but how to eliminate them.

About four years ago, a group of teachers approached our administrators for permission to create a school-wide policy to do this. It took a bit of fine-tuning to get more than 40 teachers to agree to all the details, but it worked. We went from about 10 tardies per teacher per day to between 10 and 20 tardies per day for the entire school of more than 1,100 students.

Each unexcused tardy is an automatic 30-minute detention. We love it, and parents support it. I didn't have my first tardy student this year until the third week of school.

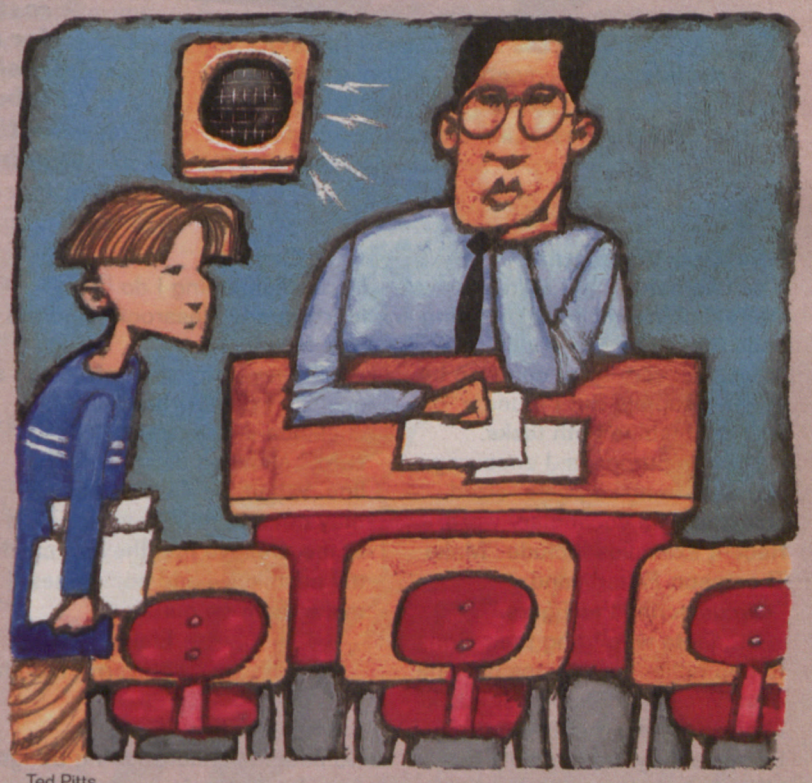
Now, if we can only figure out how to eliminate absences!

Roberta Merrill
Eighth and ninth grade family and consumer science and health teacher
Spanish Fork, Utah

Got An Answer?

How do you develop critical-thinking skills in students who just want "the right answer"?
Send your answer by regular mail to *NEA Today*, Fax 202/822-7206, or E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Please include your name, city, state, job title and grade level if applicable.

Published respondents will receive a bright *NEA Today* mug!



Ted Pitts

Learning

One-Stop Shops

Students at a vo-tech high school in Massachusetts learn skills for the future while serving the community.

Rare is the place where you can get your car fixed, do your banking, purchase flowers and enjoy a gourmet lunch—all in one stop. But residents in and about Haverhill, Massachusetts, are doing just that at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School—and students are making it possible.

Operating since 1973, the school offers students reality-based technical training in 19 fields ranging from marketing to metal fabrication.

"These operations provide students with the skills they'll need to be gainfully employed, and they service the community as well," says Thomas Ward, the cooperative education director at Whittier.

Marketing students, for example, learn banking with help from a bank manager. Computer science students design sets for plays and Web pages for local businesses. And cosmetology students give facials and perms.

"What's unique about our school is that everything is hands-on," Ward says. "What students do is not hypothetical. They can touch it, look at it, use it, and take pride in their successes."

These successes have garnered Whittier significant media and celebrity attention.

Last year, Mary Ann Esposito, host of the PBS cooking show "Ciao Italia!" and author of five cookbooks, visited the Poet's Inn, the school restaurant that serves over 200 patrons a day. She was impressed with student culinary skills, says Anthony Vallario, Jr., a chef who teaches culinary arts.

Poet's Inn diners enjoy an elegant atmosphere, and selections include chicken scallopini and cannelloni, as well as trendy desserts like tiramisu.

Vallario, a former chef at Ritz Carltons in Boston and Montreal, says students in his "shop" learn more than how to cook and bake high cuisine. They leave the Whittier experience able to computerize orders and manage a dining room. In fact, one of his students recently won a $16,000 scholarship to a culinary arts school.

Whittier students are also acclaimed locally for continually giving back to their community. When the town's little league team needed a dugout, for example, students built one.

Whittier kids have also repaired trucks for a local fire station and remodeled a police station, saving thir community more than $200,000. For other schools, they've rewired classrooms for the Internet, saving each school $25,000.

Photos by Michael Quan

Student waiters at the Poet's Inn, Whittier's school restaurant, prepare for the lunchtime rush. Bob Kampersal (above, right) works with students in the school's metal shop.

Idea Exchange

Spirited Vocabulary

It can be hard to get students interested in vocabulary building once they enter the upper grades. School spirit can also be in short supply. But I found a way to combine both tasks.

For pep purposes, I encourage students to make poster-sized signs using a vocabulary word. Recent examples include "Make Thompson *Falter*!" and "*Circumscribe* the Tigers."

Students who bring their signs to pep rallies and games get one extra vocabulary point per week. I especially push girls' sports, because they are sparsely attended.

Joshua Rutsky
Hoover, Alabama

Cut Cards

Here's something I do in my fourth-grade classroom, and the kids love it.

Whenever my students catch a mistake I have written on the chalkboard, they get a "cut card," allowing them to cut in line. When they want to use it, they cut and then hand the card to me. Believe me, they do catch my mistakes—and sometimes, I make them on purpose.

Elaine Kelley
Navarre, Florida

Safekeeping Box

Sometimes children bring things from home to play with, making it harder for them to pay attention. I resolved this problem by creating a "safekeeping box."

I found a medium-sized box with a lid, decorated it, and put a label on the box that says "Items in Safekeeping, To Be Returned Later."

When I see children playing with something that is distracting them, I ask them to put it in the box and tell them that they can retrieve it at the end of the day. This validates the importance of their personal treasures and assures them that the items will be returned.

This also cuts down on classroom distractions, because students learn quickly to avoid having things put in the box.

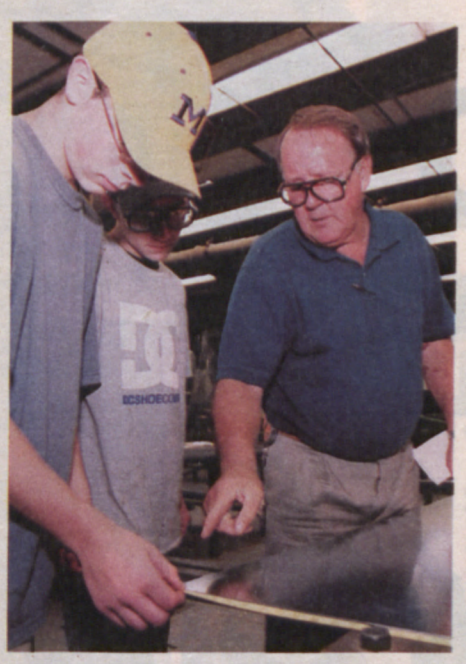
Heather Greenwood
Houston, Texas

Works4Me
NEA's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? Fax it to *NEA Today* at 202/822-7206 or E-mail: ideas@neatoday.nea.org. For more tips from NEA's weekly E-mail service, Works4Me, send an E-mail to lyris@list.nea.org.

- In the "subject" line, type: sign me up, NEA!
- In the message block, type: subscribe Works4Me
- Send the message.

To submit a tip, E-mail it to: owner-Works4Me@list.nea.org.



"What's unique about our school is that everything's hands-on," says co-op ed director Thomas Ward.

Another success at Whittier is the school's cooperative education program. This efforts matches interested juniors, in their last semester, and seniors with employers. All the students are prescreened for technical and academic knowledge. They work every other week in paid positions and attend school during the off weeks.

"The employer essentially takes the place of the shop instructor," Ward says, providing further training and grading students on attitude and ability, and on whether they work hard, follow directions, and show up on time.

The program, notes Ward, is so successful that many former co-op students now have their own businesses and are able to hire students currently attending Whittier.

Whittier also offers a Tech Prep program, where students can earn up to a semester of college credit.

According to Karen Sarkisian, Whittier's superintendent and director, the vo-tech population has changed over the years, drawing many more nontraditional vocational students, including young women and students from private schools.

"People used to think that vo-tech schools were for noncollege-bound students, but 60 percent of our students are pursuing college," Sarkisian says.

"When our kids leave Whittier, they're either working, going to college, or doing both," she adds. "We've prepared them to become a viable part of their community, and you can't ask for anything more than that." ✔

For more information: contact Thomas Ward at 978/373-4104, extension 266.

[DILEMMA]

What do you do when parents show no respect for school employees?

After 25 years in the high school classroom, I have learned that most parents who "don't respect" teachers or staff members are scared. Parents of out-of-control teenagers or of kids who are failing or misbehaving already know that they have a problem. Some want the school to do what they have been unable to do.

I often start by sympathizing with them. I tell them I was a single mom raising a son and daughter alone and know their frustrations. Most parents, at least those who aren't crazy, relax when I start that way. I also usually tell them something positive about their child, which lets them know I don't hate their kid.

Some parents are irrational, however, and, for them, you have to keep things simple and clear about their child's behavior. Don't overload them. For example, I'll say, "Johnny needs to be here on time every day, and he needs to bring his books. Can you see that he does that?"

Maggie Bartley
High school social studies teacher
Burtonsville, Maryland

■ The worst thing that a teacher could do would be to respond in kind to the disrespectful parent. This is often tough and seems to go against our human nature, but true professionals address the situation and goals for their students, program, or school.

If parents have been disrespectful during previous encounters, have a third party—a colleague or administrator—present at future conferences. Parents should be allowed to speak their opinions, but in a nonthreatening manner.

Finally, after a negative exchange, we should reflect on how we may have contributed to a parent's behavior or opinion. I have apologized many times for things I've said that were misconstrued.

Susie Stevens
High school biology and chemistry teacher
Ada, Oklahoma

■ When parents are disrespectful, you do want to communicate with them for the student's sake. This is where notes come in handy. They're a one-way street—no angry outbursts, blame, or public scenes here!

When writing notes, remember that you are a professional. Concentrate on the child. Also, carefully choose your wording so there is no innuendo or double meaning.

Do not give up. The student is looking to you for guidance.

Marcia Chambers
Fourth grade teacher
Lancaster, Wisconsin

■ During my many years as an educator, I have certainly been faced with parents who show no respect for school employees.

The only thing that I know to do is to continue to show respect for them—to "model" respectful behavior.

I also acknowledge their feelings. I don't say, "I know how you feel," as that has become trite. But I would say something like, "I respect what you are saying and can imagine your frustration."

Some years ago, when I was the director of a camp, a parent became very, very angry with me. Students participating in the camp were required to turn in medical and parental permission slips.

On one occasion, a teenage boy got sick and had to be sent home. I could not reach his father—who had signed the permission slip—but did reach the boy's grandmother, who was the alternate person listed. She, in turn, gave me the name of the boy's mother, and, eventually, the mother came to get her son.

Oh, what trouble! I got a phone call from the father, who started screaming.

"What kind of people work here?" he shouted. "Did you know that I have custody of my son, and I do not want him to be with his mother?"

First, I calmly told him that, as director, I was solely responsible for the decision.

"Well, I have my lawyer!" he responded.

"I will help you in any way that I can in solving this problem," I said, "and please call me whenever you wish."

I never heard from this man—or his lawyer—again. I believe that the interaction was successful because, instead of negating his feelings, I showed understanding and offered to help him resolve his problem if I could.

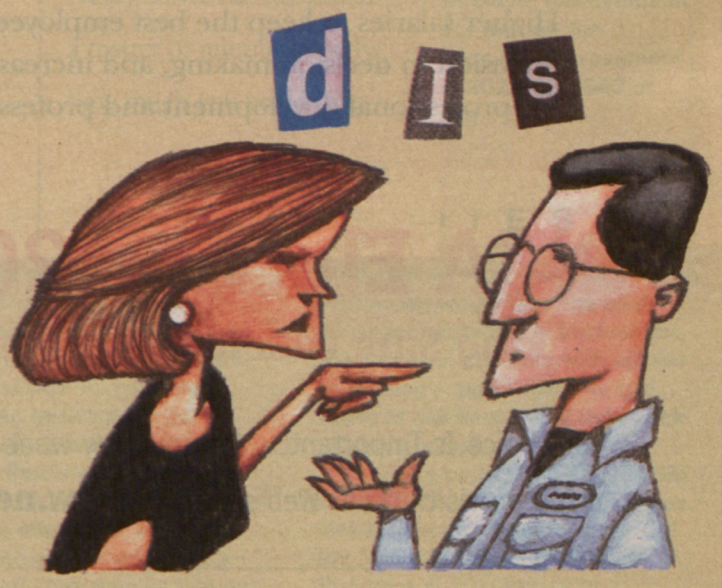
Barbara Joan Grubman
Elementary teacher
Los Angeles, California

Got An Answer?

Next month's question:
How do you finish all the paperwork required for special ed students?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or reply by regular mail or Fax (202/822-7206). Please include your name, city, state, job title and grade level, if applicable.

Published respondents will receive a bright *NEA Today* mug!



Ted Pitts

Let's make candidates measure up for children and public education

With the 2000 elections coming up, we need to know which candidates are – and aren't – supporting the issues that have a positive impact on children, public schools, and education professionals.

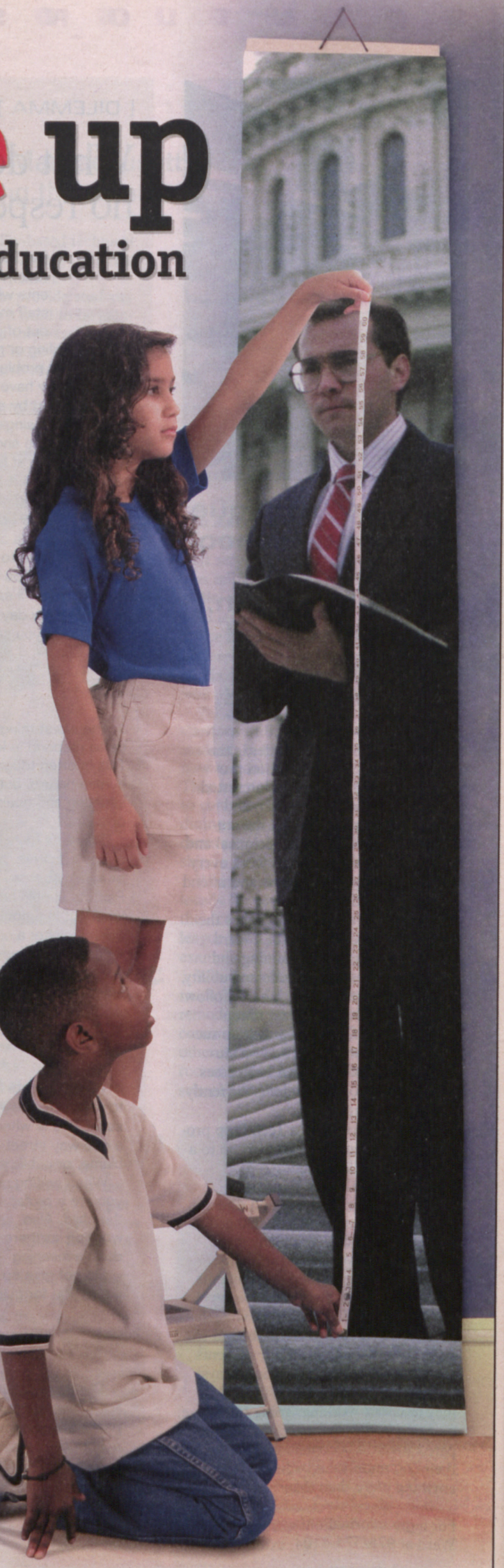
That's why before the NEA recommends any candidates, we make sure they measure up on the issues we care about:

- **Strengthening Public Education**
  Increased funding for schools and colleges, opposing vouchers and privatization, and modernizing school facilities.

- **Ensuring Children's Health & Safety**
  Supporting safe schools programs, continuing Head Start, and increasing health and nutrition programs.

- **Maximizing Student Learning**
  Smaller class sizes, early childhood education, programs for disadvantaged children, vocational education, college scholarships, school-to-work, and updating technology.

- **Respecting School Employees**
  Higher salaries to keep the best employees, inclusion in decision making, and increased funding for professional development and professional growth.



NEA Election 2000:

Making Sure Candidates Listen To Us.

Your Voice Is Important... Let us know what you think by visiting our Web site @ **www.nea.org/lac**

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Teachers to Parents and Students: 'Let's Decide Together'

An innovative conferencing model involving parents, teachers, and students helped boost the reading skills of students in Tacoma, Washington.

As a first grader at Larchmont Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington, Jacquez Page was assigned to a special learning assistance program because he wasn't reading—at all. Now in the third grade, he's reading slightly above grade level. And he's not the only student making strides in learning, thanks to a unique conferencing program developed by the school's on-site decision-making team.

Partnership Conferencing's philosophy is simple, says Gayle Nakayama, a reading specialist at Larchmont who helped create the program. "Family involvement increases student achievement."

The program is a departure from old-style parent-teacher conferences where the teacher dictates to parents what their child needs. In this model, parents, teacher, and student form a partnership and meet at least three times a year. Teachers listen actively, while parents take the lead in setting goals for their kids. Then, the parties decide on strategies to achieve the goals.

"Having the student there is the critical difference," says Tracy Allen, a third and fourth grade Larchmont teacher. "All parties communicate and we each have an equal part. Before, everyone talked about the child. Now, kids feel ownership and work harder to reach their goals."

Tacoma, Washington, reading teacher Gayle Nakayama (inset) consults with LaVonne Page and her 8-year-old son Jacquez, a third grader at Larchmont Elementary.

Photos: Ellen Banner

During Jacquez's first years in school, he, his mother LaVonne Page, and his teachers met regularly. The conferences "put the parent and teacher on the same level, knowing what a child is striving for," LaVonne says. "I give all the teachers credit" for Jacquez's reading improvement.

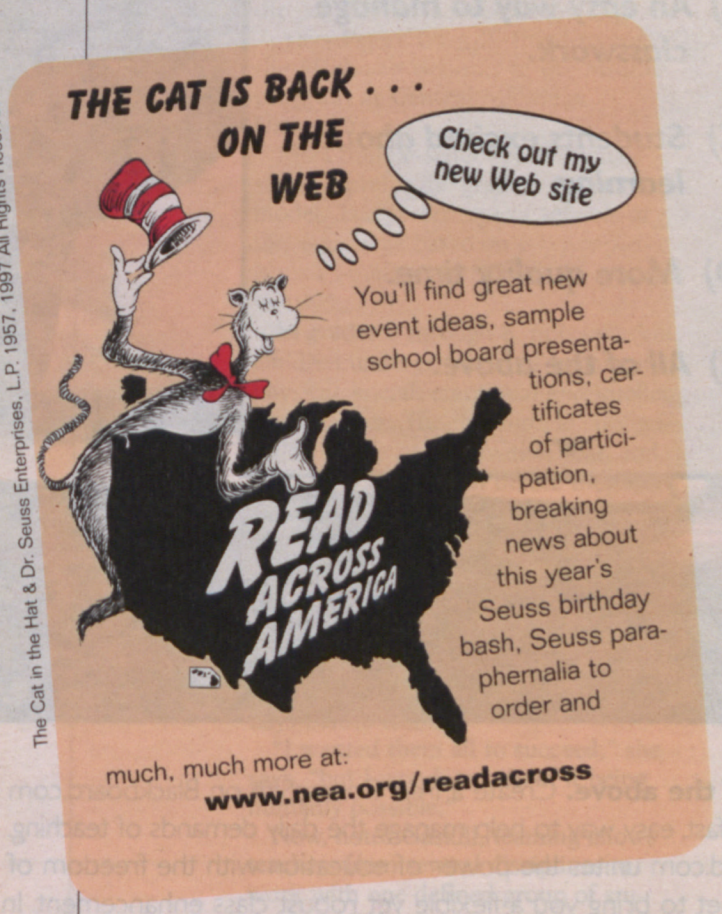
Larchmont's reading scores have steadily improved since the program started four years ago. Bottom-quartile scores, for example, decreased from 24.2 percent to 18.75 percent.

Under Nakayama's direction, the Tacoma Education Association (TEA), in partnership with the school district, won a grant from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) to develop the program. TEA has applied for another NFIE grant to help expand the program to 11 Tacoma schools this year.

While Partnership Conferencing is demanding, many teachers at Larchmont recognize its benefits. "There is more paperwork," Allen says, "but it's better than just putting grades on a report card and not feeling you have accomplished anything."

Another program plus—about 95 percent of parents now participate in school activities. Nakayama recalls one mother whose initial conferences were held at the Dairy Queen across the street, because she was so uncomfortable coming into the school. Now she visits regularly—and she never misses her kids' Partnership Conferences. ✔

For more, contact Gayle Nakayama at 253/564-7372. For info on the National Foundation for Improvement of Education, call 202/822-7840 or visit www.NFIE.org.


THE CAT IS BACK . . .
ON THE WEB
Check out my new Web site
You'll find great new event ideas, sample school board presentations, certificates of participation, breaking news about this year's Seuss birthday bash, Seuss paraphernalia to order and
READ ACROSS AMERICA
much, much more at:
www.nea.org/readacross

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READING: A TALE OF TWO STUDIES

In 1991, American fourth graders participating in the International Literacy Study (IEA)—which compared the reading achievement of students in 32 countries—outperformed students from all other countries except Finland.

But in 1998, only 62 percent of fourth grade students taking the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) performed at the "basic," or minimal, level or higher.

Why were the results so different?

One reason may be that IEA used short passages, excerpts and paragraphs, and only multiple choice questions. It was so easy that some American students seemed to "top out" on the test.

NAEP used long passages, full-length stories and articles. Students spent half their time answering open-ended questions—some of which required short responses, while others required students to write one or more paragraphs. NAEP's standards are seemingly higher than IEA's. Even basic proficiency standards on many state-level reading tests are not as difficult to meet as those on NAEP.

The fact that large numbers of students don't reach the basic level on NAEP is often cited as proof that America has a reading problem. The real story may be that our students can read—although not as well as we would like. The challenge for educators is to close the gap between students with access to reading support systems and those at risk because of their backgrounds or lack of support.

For more on IEA (NCES 96-258) or NAEP (NCES 1999-459) studies, visit http:nces.ed.gov/naep or call the National Center for Education Statistics at 202/219-1828.

What do you get when you create a CourseSite?™

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST

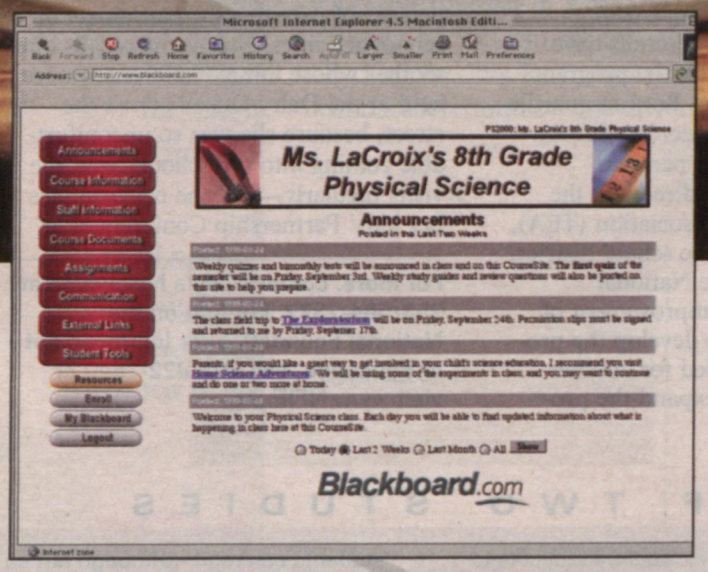
A) Students communicating freely.

B) An easy way to manage classwork.

C) Students excited about learning.

D) More quality time.

E) All of the above.



Kristin LaCroix, eighth-grade teacher, logs on to her Blackboard.com CourseSite to give her students real-time help on their homework.

E) All of the above. Create a free CourseSite on Blackboard.com and get a fast, easy way to help manage the daily demands of teaching. Blackboard.com unites the power of education with the freedom of the Internet to bring you a flexible yet robust class enhancement. In just a few steps, you can put your own CourseSite online and easily customize it with homework assignments, class notes, even tests... without having any special programming knowledge. So take your expertise from the classroom and extend it online with Blackboard.com. Visit **www.blackboard.com** today.

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FYI

Middle Schools: Something New or Tried and True?

The middle school is emerging from its own adolescence. What lessons can we draw about what makes for learning success?

The past two decades have witnessed an enormous growth in middle schools. Researchers have been busy, too, and they now have a good bit to report on what works.

Muddle in the Middle

Ten-to-14-year-old kids attend schools of different configurations. In 1995, these kids went to schools with the following grade composition:

11%
grades 5-8
1,223 schools

55%
grades 6-8
6,155 schools

22%
grades 7-8
2,412 schools

13%
grades 7-9
1,425 schools

Illustration by Karin Huggens

Source: National Middle School Association

Which grade configuration seems to work best for kids in the 10- to 14-year-old range?
With so many school configurations in place—grades 5-8, 6-8, 7-9, 5-7, and more—the only element all middle schools have in common is grade 7, says Peggy Gaskill, the director of the Michigan Schools in the Middle program at Central Michigan University.

Most middle-school professionals seem to prefer the grade 6-8 school model. The percentage of schools in this age range based on 6-8 jumped from 15 percent in 1981 to 55 percent in 1995.

In grades 6 through 8, notes Gaskill, children undergo a host of turbulent physical, social, emotional and intellectual changes. The three-grade configuration "gives us a transition year, and then a period of calm before they start getting ready to leave again."

Are interdisciplinary teams making a significant difference?
Peggy Gaskill remembers seeing as many as 170 students a day coming through her Detroit classroom in the days before teams.

"I wanted them all to succeed," she says, "but I wondered about it being humanly possible."

Now, notes Gaskill, teaming allows teachers from several disciplines to work with one defined group of students, building personal relationships and a community of learners.

"Achievement is improved and there are fewer discipline problems when you have children in these kind of communities," Gaskill says. "Teams in schools can be positive 'gangs' for kids. Research shows kids need to belong."

But, Gaskill cautions, teams won't function well—and children's achievement levels may fall short of their potential—unless sufficient time is set aside for teachers to do team planning. Individual planning time for instruction, she adds, is also essential.

Can a rigorous curriculum also meet developmental needs?
The two can go hand in hand, Gaskill believes.

"Middle schoolers aren't squirrelly," she explains. "They're just trying to make decisions about the kind of adults they'll become. They can learn. These children have the need for academic stimulation as well as warm fuzzies. If children feel they'll do well, they will."

But the push for higher scores and more testing shouldn't result in middle-school educators ignoring developmental issues, stresses Gaskill.

"Our job is to prepare them for life," she says, "not just for high school."

What's behind the movement toward specific middle-school teacher certification?
Traditionally, there's been a misfit between teacher-preparation programs for elementary or secondary certification and the actual three-tiered way schools are organized.

But that's changing, says Gaskill, who's on the teacher preparation and certification committee of the National Middle School Association.

About 33 states currently have some type of specific middle-school credentialing. The goal, Gaskill adds, is for young adolescents to have teachers who are their advocates rather than have teachers "who really want to be somewhere else."

The push toward increased content expertise for middle-school teachers is also fueling the certification movement. National Middle School Association licensure guidelines call for concentration in at least two academic areas.

New research, says Gaskill, shows two-teacher teams with perhaps 60 students as the best match, making content expertise even more critical.

Who makes a good middle-school teacher?
"You have to be able to laugh at yourself and be flexible," says Juana Hawkins, a sixth-grade teacher at Silver Spring International, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

This 26-year veteran says middle-school students—who act like independent adults one day and get in a tizzy over their new lockers the next—need teachers ready for a challenge.

Her colleague Denise DeFiore says the ideal middle-school educator combines the elementary teacher's strategies with the high school teacher's passion for and knowledge of a subject area.

What's on the horizon?
The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, a public/private partnership, recently named two "schools to watch"—one rural and one in a small city—and is searching for an inner-city school others can emulate.

The two schools, each with a substantial number of at-risk students, have one element in common: They're moving toward academic success for all in a way that's developmentally sound. For more, check www.edc.org/FSC/MGF/Schools/home.html. ✔

To learn more . . .

For more about the Michigan Schools in the Middle, call 517/77-GR-678 or see http://edcen.ehhs. cmich.edu/~msim/. Also contact the National Middle School Association at 800/528-NMSA or on the Web at www.nmsa.org/html.

TEAMWORK

Putting on a Show in Vermont

Sometimes show and tell is the only way to help a community understand ESP work.

It's a common story: The paraeducators at the Shelburne (Vermont) Community School felt their school board members did not understand what paraeducators actually did. But rather than just complain, several of these paraeducators found a unique way to educate both the school board and their community.

Michelle Charron and Kathy Roszman, seven years veterans at the Shelburne School, decided to take a positive approach—by focusing on all the contributions paraeducators make.

With the help of fellow paraeducators Nikki Noel and Mary Freeman, the president of the 35-member Chittenden South Education Association, Charron and Roszman wrote out a script, took lots of pictures, and created a PowerPoint multimedia presentation for the school board.

Neither Charron and Roszman had used presentation software before, but they didn't let that slow them down.

At last November's school board meeting, with support staff, teachers, community residents, and cable TV cameras all on hand, the two paraeducators gave their presentation.

Craig Line

Kathy Roszman and Michelle Charron, right, used their computer skills to tell citizens what paras do for kids. Above: the NEA ESP Web page.

And along with the computer presentation, Charron and Roszman also gave each school board member a scrapbook featuring a collection of photos that display the varied work Shelburne paras perform.

The result? The presentation didn't leave school board members jumping up and down and applauding, but they did pay attention.

In subsequent bargaining sessions with the school district, Charron reports, support staff in Shelburne won a lot of the training provisions they were seeking.

"But the biggest thing we paraeducators gained," Roszman notes, "was more respect from teachers—and more respect for ourselves." ✔

Behind the Scenes

You can see a Web version of the Shelburne paraeducator PowerPoint presentation on the NEA Web site. Just point your browser to www.nea.org/esp/parappt/. Do you have your own example of creative use of technology? If so, we'd like to hear about it. E-mail us at espinput@list.nea.org.

Going the Extra Mile

Virginia support staffer **Gregory Gilliam** has been cited by his NEA state affiliate for his commitment and "proven results" in working with inner-city students and parents.

Gilliam, a parent resource coordinator at Richmond's Whitcomb School, heads the city's Hands Without Guns program. He's also initiated GED programs and training for parents.

On top of all that, this Virginia activist has created programs that use AmeriCorps and local university students for tutoring and written several successful grant applications.

Small wonder that Gilliam chairs the Richmond Education Association's community involvement initiative.

Once a year, that unsung hero, the school office staffer, gets recognized at the Secretaries Tribute of the Garden Grove (California) Education Association/CTA.

GGEA leaders ask Association reps at each site to nominate a valued secretary or clerk for this tribute, and then draw the name of one of the nominees to receive special honors on behalf of everyone in attendance.

This year, the roses went to **Pat deCourcy**, a secretary at Jordan Intermediate. For somebody picked at random, you could hardly do better than deCourcy.

"Pat is a highly dedicated employee who's admired and respected by all her colleagues at Jordan," noted the GGEA newsletter after the ceremonies. "She is never too busy to stop and lend a helping hand. She is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to knowing about the dates, times, and places of all district events. The faculty and staff at Jordan feel blessed to have her at their

TEAM PLAYER

Committed to Kids

Rachelle Omenson

Bus driver Vickie Hendrickson's day is pretty much a blur of activity as she fulfills her many responsibilities to students, school district, and Association.

Name: Vickie Hendrickson

Job title: Bus driver, lunchroom/playground aide, and administrative assistant for her local, the Education Association of Morris (TEAM)

Experience: 10 years.

What I do: I provide bus transportation for both schools in the Morris School District. I also supervise the lunch-time activities of students at Alfred Vale Elementary School, and I help process support staff grievances and serve on my Association's negotiations team.

My credentials: I have a Commercial Driver's License and recently completed the New Jersey Education Association's first Union Training School. I've also attended many NJEA leadership workshops, and I'm currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration.

How I help students achieve: As "Ms. Vickie," I have a pretty good relationship with the children I supervise.

I especially like to reach the more difficult students. I try to talk with them and find out who they are and where they come from. My primary concern is that the children I serve are safe and happy.

I also like to help students, teachers, and parents get more involved in their schools and communities.

As my local Association's PRIDE committee chair for four years, I organized and launched projects that included collecting and refurbishing over 700 stuffed animals and books for community shelters. We also arranged for local leaders to be guest readers in the NEA's Read Across America program and set up an exhibit of student art at a local mall.

How I team up with my colleagues: I always try to keep the lines of communication open. I'm always talking with teachers, discussing if they had a bad day or are having problems or work overload in class, or even at home.

I find out what the teachers need, and then I try to see how I can help them. To me, cooperation between support staff and teachers is the key to serving the students well.

To contact Vickie Hendrickson, a nominee for NJEA's ESP of the Year, send E-mail to VickieM14@aol.com. ✔

RESOURCES

Make Your School "Smart"

How would you answer the following question?

Energy is a minor school district budget item, true or false.

The answer? **False:** For many school districts, energy costs are second only to salaries.

How about this question: Schools can't save much by being energy smart, true or false?

False. Simple behavior changes can save a school thousands of dollars a year. The Seattle school district, in fact, saved $20,000 in a year just by turning off the lights in 250 vending machines!

These facts come from "EnergySmart Schools," a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. The goal of EnergySmart Schools: to reduce school energy use 25 percent by the year 2010, and invest the $1.5 billion annual savings in educating children.

For more energy information, on everything from school buses to buildings, visit the Web www.eren.doe.gov/energysmartschools/.

Top 10 Cleaning Concerns

Everyone has a "top 10" list, so why not one for building cleaning?

Here's a top 10 list of concerns compiled by five instructors at the City College of San Francisco in California who have been training new and experienced cleaning workers for over 30 years: bloodborne pathogens, ergonomics, hazardous equipment, specialty cleaning, professionalism, lead paint, asbestos, integrated pest management, hazardous chemicals, and sick building syndrome caused by sealed buildings.

For more information, see the Web at www.parish-supply.com/cleaning_concerns.htm.

Navigating the 'Net

If you're just looking for information on a particular education topic, you might want to make the Internet School Library Media Center one of your first stops. The Resource Center provides links to Web resources on a wide range of topics, from special education to copyright law. Find it on the Web at http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/.

Get on the List

In today's Information Age, E-mail has become one of the best ways to share information among far-flung colleagues. School nurses can use the SCHLRN-L E-mail discussion list to stay in touch with what's going on in their field.

With over 1,300 participants, the SCHLRN-L list is a vehicle for networking, disseminating research, discussing legislative and policy issues, and spreading information about grants and professional development opportunities.

To subscribe, simply go to the SCHLRN-L Web page at www.netspace.org/cgi-bin/lwgate/ schlrn-l/. Then just click and follow the "Subscribe to SCHLRN-L" link.

school and appreciate the time she spends helping them succeed at their jobs."

Ask Washington State ESP Tom Kamerzell what he does and he'll tell you he's an educator in charge of a $5 million facility.

As a head custodian in the rural Washington town of Colfax, Kamerzell is the combined "construction, electrical, and building crew" at Jennings Elementary/Middle School.

When he's not cleaning, fixing, or—yes—freeing a student from a locker, this NEA member is dispensing sound advice to students.

"I do what I can to help students feel good about themselves and let them know someone is interested in them," says Kamerzell. "Someone who works with kids in this age group needs to know the phrase, 'Don't sweat the small stuff.'"

Colleagues of Kamerzell, the Washington Education Association's 1999 ESP of the Year, will tell you this fixer's work with students remains his central contribution.

"He plays a very key role in creating an environment of respect for persons and property in the school," says special education teacher Christine Carney. "Tom is willing to supervise detention students for custodial work and is known for being clear, direct, and fair. He accomplishes minor miracles with his no-nonsense approach seasoned with humor."

These people skills put Tom Kamerzell in pretty good stead with his community, too. This NEA member has served on school levy committees and the local city council, and now sits on the Colfax Planning Commission.

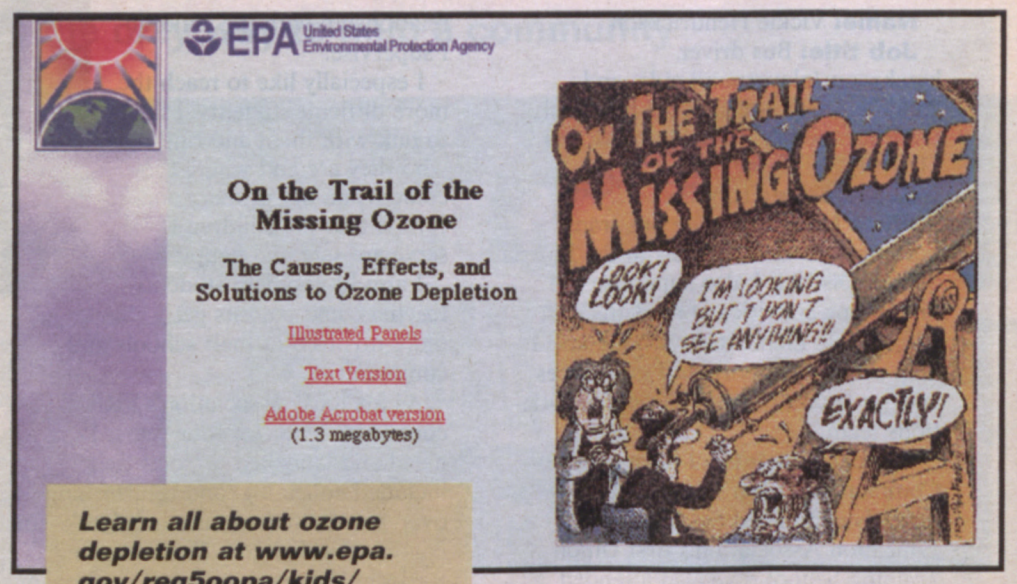
TIPS FOR THE WIRED CLASSROOM

Where Has All the Ozone Gone?

While working with two fourth grade classes that were studying the weather and its effects on ozone depletion, I found a useful Web site, On the Trail of the Missing Ozone (www.epa.gov/reg5oopa/kids/missing.htm), published by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The information on this site is easy to read and understand—and it's fun for the students to go through, since it is presented as illustrated cartoon panels. The site contains all of the terminology and concepts the students were talking about in their classrooms.

Janet Platt
Technology coordinator
Tolland, Connecticut
tolland@neca.com


EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
On the Trail of the Missing Ozone
The Causes, Effects, and Solutions to Ozone Depletion
Illustrated Panels
Text Version
Adobe Acrobat version
(1.3 megabytes)
ON THE TRAIL OF THE MISSING OZONE
LOOK! LOOK!
I'M LOOKING BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING!!
EXACTLY!

Learn all about ozone depletion at www.epa.gov/reg5oopa/kids/missing.htm.

Integrated Lesson Plans

I have developed lesson plans for grades 9-12 that integrate Web and software tools into the curriculum and promote higher-level thinking skills through collaboration and communication of ideas.

For a complete listing of my lesson plans, go to www.storywind.net/mccarthy/lessons/index.htm. Among the lessons you'll find are:

- My Personal Inspiration Project: Students evaluate personal decisions and life experiences relating to three questions—Who am I? Where have I been? Where am I going?—to reflect and learn what internal desire drives their happiness. This four- to five-week lesson uses poetry and lyric Web resources, online personality tests, and PowerPoint to express the self using images, text, and recordings.
- Electronic Chapters Project: Students work in teams to research the evolution of cultural and social issues surrounding Westward expansion, immigration, or civil rights. They practice writing and evaluate ways of improving drafts through workshopping. Teams synthesize research from text and online sources into a PowerPoint file to create a multimedia version of a textbook chapter. These chapters become a reference tool for other students studying the topics.
- Blues Song Project: Students study the history of blues music and create songs and perform them using the audio and visual capabilities of PowerPoint. Communication is encouraged through small group and online discussions, peer conferencing on student-created blues songs, and publication of pieces on the Web for students to appraise and enjoy.

John McCarthy
English teacher
Clarkston, Michigan
seekclouds@aol.com

School City Living

School City is a new Web site that links students, teachers, and parents in one easy place. It's free! Schools can build and update their own Web sites, teachers can communicate with parents about lessons and students' progress, and users can find information, fun lessons, and chat rooms. Check it out at www.schoolcity.com.

Elaine Womack
Sixth grade teacher
San Jose, California
Elaine_Womack@EdTek.sjusd.k12.ca.us

Cool Classroom Resources

I have two great items to share.

- Filamentality, a link off of the Pacific Bell Knowledge Network Explorer page, is a cool fill-in-the-blank Web resource that guides you through making your own Web site containing hotlists, treasure hunts, samplers, etc. It is totally free and can be updated anywhere you have Internet access.

I've introduced this tool to many classroom teachers at my school and around the state, and the response has been awesome. Check it out at www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/.

- *Art Explosion*, a CD-ROM collection of clip art, comes in Mac and IBM versions. It's widely available—any of the software warehouse catalogs should sell it—and versions run from $69.95 to $149.95 and offer thousands of images.

I've purchased a number of sets for our Business Education Department and desktop publishing course. I know clip art doesn't appear to be the most intellectually challenging software, but the kids and staff get hooked. They're in our lab round the clock to use this stuff. We live in a very visual world, and this clip art rocks!

Rita Mortenson
High school educational technology coordinator
Verona, Wisconsin
mortensonr@verona.k12.wi.us

My favorite Web site

"Science Daily News (www.sciencedaily.com) gives 10 daily stories encompassing all areas of science. I leave the site up on the computer, and the kids come in to check if there's something that interests them."

Danny Elegante,
High school chemistry teacher
Huntsville, AL

Tech Tools

- **Want freebies? The brand-new edition of *The Guide to FREE Computer Materials* lists sources for free disks, videotapes, downloads, booklets, magazines, and posters. $38.95. Order from Educators Progress Service, Inc., 214 Center Street, Randolph, WI 53956, or call 888/951-4469.**
- **Hip Pocket Change is a new learning community developed by the U.S. Mint, the Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America, and a team of teachers. This Web site (www2.usmint.gov/kids/index.html) uses coins to teach American history, math, and language arts.**
- **Explore space on Internet TV at SpaceWatch (www.spacewatch.com). Students can watch live telecasts and "talk" with astronauts and scientists from Space Center Houston. Programs are shown Tuesdays at 2 p.m. and Thursdays at 8 p.m. EDT.**

TALK TO US:

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wiredclassroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

Leveling the Technology Playing Field

A California educator brings the world of computers into the homes and lives of his low-income students.

Who:
James Laub, computer science teacher, Franklin Middle School, Long Beach, California

E-mail:
jlaub@lbusd.k12.ca.us

Inspiration:
James Laub knows what his students are up against. Ninety percent of them receive welfare and over half have limited English skills. He also knows that his students live in a neighborhood plagued by the city's worst gang and drug activity. They're at risk of one day joining the 40 percent of local high school students who drop out each year.

But Laub, as a former IBM employee, also knows that in Information Age America computer skills can be an effective weapon against unemployment and poverty.

"I want my students to be able to compete technologically with their counterparts who are wealthier," Laub says. "My whole focus is on real-world experience. Most of my students won't continue on to college, but at least they'll have some skills to focus on."

Lesson:
To get his students on par with kids from more affluent households, Laub launched his Adopt-A-Computer program, which provides computers to students—for a mere $25.

Laub solicits local businesses to donate their used computers and then sells the salvaged equipment to his students, the price covering software and mailing costs. In just three years, he has placed about 300 computers in student homes.

"The computers help bring them up to speed with the rest of the world," Laub says. "And each computer also benefits everyone else in the family. A lot of the parents don't work, and having a computer makes them more competitive, too."

Having a computer at home, says eighth grader Vanna Soth, "has improved my writing."

"Now I might be able to get Internet access," she adds, "so that'll help me even more."

Laub is planning to seek donations from businesses throughout the state and country. And his program already has gone international. Over the summer, Laub sent 30 computers to schools in Cambodia—where many of his students trace family roots—and he hopes to place 1,000 machines there in the next year.

In his computer science course, Laub prepares students for the high-tech job market by focusing on building Web pages. As part of his class, he offers his students' new skills—for free—to local businesses.

"It's a plus for both sides," says Laub. "The students get to know how a business works and get a real-world skill, and the businesses get a free Web page."

Bob Riha, Jr.

His students have designed about 30 Web sites for Long Beach schools and a handful for small, local companies.

Click:
Parents are particularly enthusiastic about Laub's program. "This computer has saved me thousands of dollars since I do not have to buy a new computer—which I couldn't afford anyway," says Amelia Castro, a Franklin parent. "Many of my daughter's friends do not have a computer, so they come over to my house and use it for school."

Laub would like to see other educators start computer-giving programs of their own. Most businesses, he points out, upgrade their computers every few years. They often have extra computers that would otherwise be thrown away.

"Other people can do this, too," Laub says. "It's a no-brainer, really." ✔

—Marisa Wong

When businesses cast off computers, California teacher Jim Laub finds a good home for them—with his students.

My favorite Software

"*MathGen* ($35, www.mathgen.com) allows you to custom-create your own math worksheets in seconds. It's great for elementary teachers as well as secondary teachers who teach remedial math."

Keri Ann Colgan, High school remedial math teacher
Riverside, CA

Bytes for Beginners

I have an Internet-age twist on the old "copying from the encyclopedia" problem. Some of my students are finding it irresistible to simply cut and paste chunks of text from a Web page into their written assignments. How can I stop this plagiarism?

Cut-and-paste plagiarism poses quite a challenge as tech-savvy students tap the power of the Internet to complete their writing assignments.

Your first step to curtailing plagiarism is to understand why students do it, and then to make your policy on plagiarism understood.

Despite warnings to students about consequences, plagiarism can still occur. And distinguishing between students who unintentionally misrepresent their work and the minority who make a conscious decision to do so is equally frustrating.

Help your students understand what constitutes plagiarism. You might be surprised to learn that many students believe that—since the Internet is open to everyone—anything they find is fair game to use as they want.

Perhaps the most effective way to combat plagiarism is to assign papers and essays that call on students to relay personal experiences or draw from classroom discussions.

If you do need to validate a student's work, identify unusual keywords or unique phrases within the paper and search for them in one of the large search engines such as Hotbot (www.hotbot.com) or Lycos (www.lycos.com).

Also, consider browsing these "term paper mill" Web sites:

- School Sucks—www.schoolsucks.com
- A1 Termpaper—www.a1-termpaper.com
- Research Papers Online A+—www.ezwrite.com
- Free Term Papers International—www.freepapers.com
- Dorian's Paper Archive—www.fas.harvard.edu/~dberger/papers
- Evil House of Cheat—www.CheatHouse.com

Have comments or questions about technology? Go to www.nea.org/cet, or E-mail your questions to webeditor@dear.nea.org.

E-Pals on the Internet

How's this for distance learning: These Oklahoma fifth-graders get their first '15 minutes of fame' in China!

Lisa Rudy Hoke

Out in Duncan, Oklahoma, teacher **Barbara Jenkins** and her fifth grade students aren't letting distance get in the way of sharing ideas and making friends. Their friends just happen to live in China's Liaoning Province.

In the province, Jenkins' fifth graders are now celebrities of a sort. Last year, several of the students had their photos featured on the front page of Liaoning's local paper.

The newspaper feature profiled the pen pal program in Duncan's Empire School.

"My students were just astounded at the article," says Jenkins. "It was amazing for them to think that they were stars in another country!"

The American students' rise to international "fame" began in December 1995 when Jenkins, then living in China, visited a fifth grade class at the Panjin Experimental School. After returning to the United States, Jenkins initiated a letter-exchange between her class and the students in the Chinese class.

The pen pal effort just grew from there. Currently, each school year, a new rotation of 85 American children and their Chinese counterparts exchange letters, pictures, stamps, and knick-knacks.

The pen pal program, says Jenkins, has taught her students a lot about Chinese culture, and Jenkins is delighted about her school's expanded global perspective.

"Many of my students have not been outside Oklahoma or even their own county," she points out. "This pen pal program shows that there are real people out there beyond Oklahoma, beyond the prairie. And even though those people are halfway around the world, in many more ways than you think, they're just like us." ✔

Follow Me to Broadway

High school theatre arts teacher **Bob Henrichs** first knew he was Broadway-bound when, as an elementary school student, he played the part of a cackling witch in a play performed by his English class.

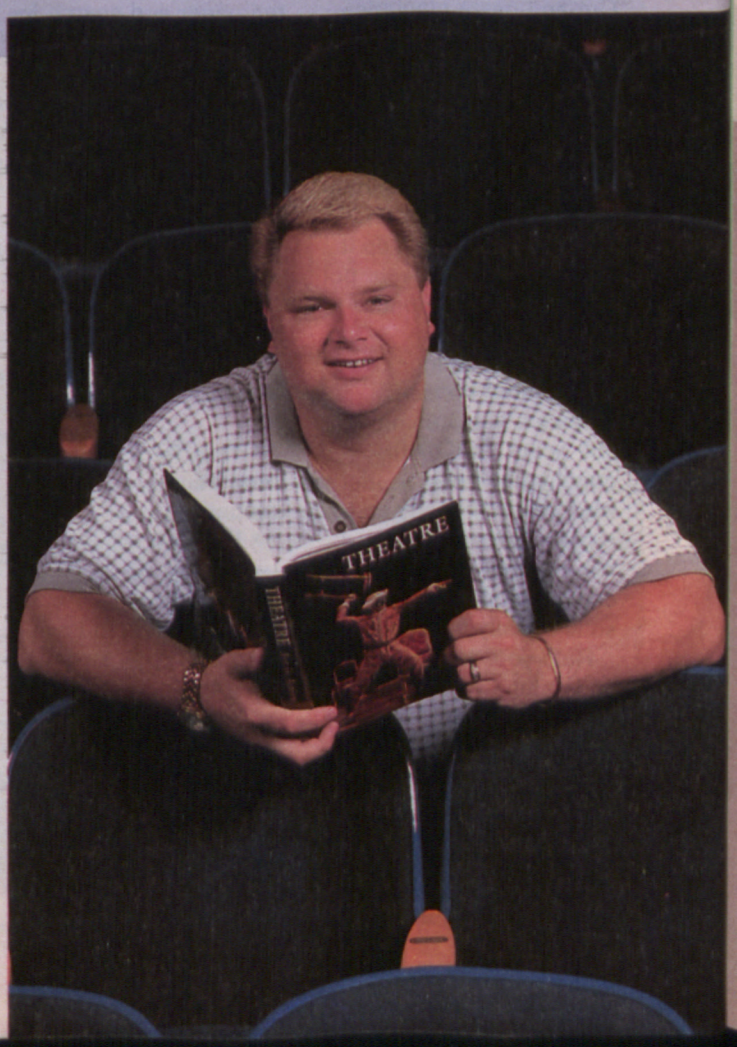
Today, 20 years after that wonderfully witchy role, Henrichs regularly visits the brightly lit theatres of Broadway, usually accompanied by a few of his students from Hastings High School in Nebraska. He comes not to perform, but to teach.

Henrichs initiated a semi-annual class trip to New York City several years ago. The purpose: to expose his students to professional theatre. During this summer's week-long excursion, Henrichs and eight of his students saw six Broadway musicals, participated in drama workshops taught by famous theatre veterans, and even spotted a few stage celebrities.

Back in Hastings, Henrichs doesn't just watch theatre—he makes it happen. Besides teaching, Henrichs directs Hastings High School's three annual stage productions and supervises the Educational Theatre Association's International Thespian Festival, held at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

In July, Henrichs, only 31, became the president of this 2 million-member international organization of theatre teachers and students.

"Theatre arts teach children to learn 'outside the box,'" says Henrichs. "The goal isn't necessarily to create Tony Award winners out of my students, but to make them good consumers and appreciators of art and to help them express themselves through art." ✔



Randy Hampton

Steve Wilson

A Bigger Game Than Football

Gary Allen Clark, the 1998 NFL High School Football Coach of the Year, believes that to be a good coach, you need to be a good teacher. For running back Adrian Murrell, who nominated Clark, Clark fit both bills.

"Coach Clark challenged me to learn," Murrell says. "He wanted me to excel in football, in my studies, and in life."

Coach and athlete first met at Hawaii's Leilehua High School, and a strong relationship soon flourished. Together, the two struggled to get Murrell into college and, at the same time, confronted problems on the field.

"I like to see striving youngsters achieve success," says Clark. "This is the way we can enrich the lives of students and athletes."

Clark is now a teacher at Independence High School and a football coach at Timpview High School in Provo, Utah, and Murrell is with the Arizona Cardinals. But they still keep in contact.

"It was more than just football," Clark says. "I consider Adrian the best of friends."

As a recipient of the NFL honor, Clark receives a $5,000 award. A youth program propelled by Clark and Murrell will also receive a $10,000 grant. ✔

A New Day in the Delta

For 17 years, Mississippi NEA member **Janice Bass** saw first-hand the negative impact poverty was having on her special education students. Every day she encountered students who were placed in her class not because they were physically disabled, but because physical and mental undernourishment had taken their toll.

That's why Bass decided to help launch an Even Start program in Leflore County. Her goal was simple: to help families in need overcome the cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

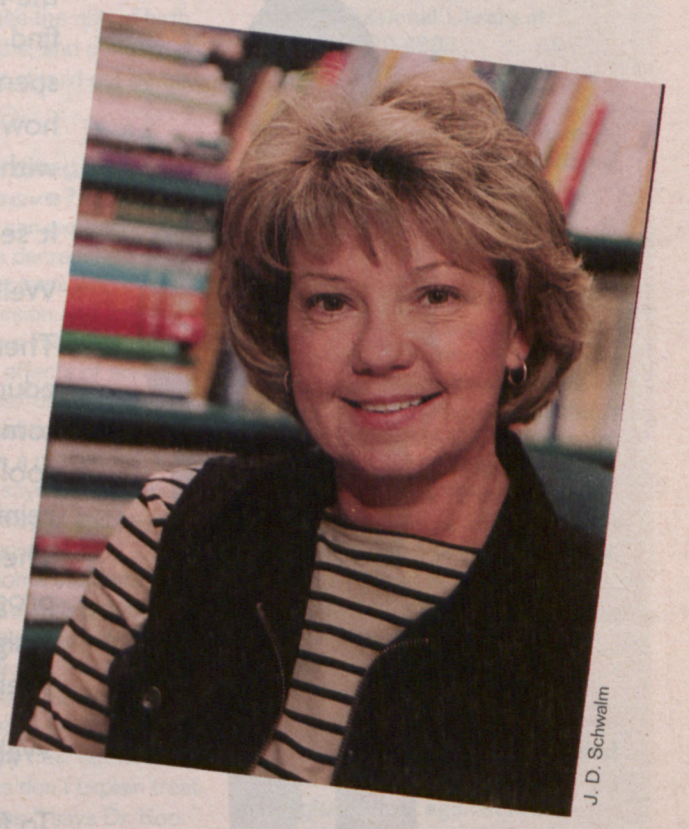
"A parent is a child's first teacher," says Bass. "Here in the Mississippi Delta people have fewer opportunities, so we need to teach parents how to use their own personal resources."

Bass, the master teacher/coordinator of the federally funded program, coordinates all the activities Even Start offers. These range from adult education to child development training and tutoring.

Bass also works with the program's teachers to develop lesson plans that are taught at weekly "Family Night Out" events, which offer different educational activities for every member of local families.

After four years of working in Even Start and assisting hundreds of families, Bass says she has seen a change in attitude in families who have gone through her program.

"The self esteem of the whole family improves," Bass says. ✔


J. D. Schwalm

Lifeguard on Long-Term Duty

For 30 years, **Jate Walsh** has saved countless kids from drowning in the classroom. Over the years, he has also saved kids from drowning in the water as well.

Since the summer of '69, this social studies teacher at Cape Henlopen High School in Lewes, Delaware, has guarded Rehoboth Beach—and saved over 250 lives. One of the more popular East Coast beach resorts, Rehoboth Beach draws hundreds of thousands of sun lovers each summer.

"I feel like I'm making a contribution to the community," Walsh says. "I got into teaching because I like interacting with and helping people, and lifeguarding is just an extension of that."

For the last 13 years, Walsh has captained the lifeguard patrol, maintaining the facilities, checking equipment to make sure it's all in good condition, and coordinating the Rehoboth Beach Patrol Olympics. He's also responsible for hiring and training new lifeguards.

"We have to deal with all different situations, and wind and surf conditions are unpredictable," says Walsh. "I've had to administer CPR, and I've seen four people stabbed by their umbrellas."

His motto: "Don't take anything for granted, and don't let your guard down, because the minute you do, something happens!" ✔

Gary Emeigh

Trying to figure out how the Internet fits into your classroom?

Start here.

Even if you use the Internet all the time, it's hard to know where to start. How do you find material that's relevant to the lesson you're teaching say tomorrow morning? Once you find it, how do you make it easy for kids to use so that they spend their time on the Internet in a productive way? And how can you use the Internet to keep in better touch with families?

It seems like there ought to be an easy way to do all that.

Well now there is.

There's a tool that lets you find the best educational resources for the lesson that you're teaching tomorrow — without staying up all night searching. There's a tool that lets you help kids spend time on Web activities that reinforce your lessons, not Web sites that distract them. There's a tool that lets you – without having to learn Web programming — put homework assignments and classwork on the Web for kids' families to see.

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Understanding Acne and Its Effect on Self-Esteem

Acne is a fact of life for 73 percent of young people ages 12 to 19. And the disorder, whether mild or severe, can be devastating. Sufferers can become depressed and socially withdrawn. By better understanding what causes acne—and what can cure it—school staffers can help students cope. Ariane Lopez from the NEA Health Information Network offers an update below on what's new on the acne front.

What causes acne—and why is acne most prevalent among adolescents?

Heredity and skin type largely determine who will develop acne. In adolescents, the surge of hormonal activity can cause sebaceous or oil glands—most numerous on the face, chest, and back—to become more active. The stimulation of these glands increases production of a fatty substance called "sebum," which clogs pores. These pores become a breeding ground for bacteria, which can lead to acne.

What can treat mild cases of acne?

Over-the-counter acne lotions applied directly to the acne dry up oil and promote exfoliation—the falling off of dead skin cells. Products that contain benzoyl peroxide, sulfur, resorcinol, or salicylic acid are the most effective. Other products containing alpha-hydroxy often improve acne and skin texture.

What works with more serious conditions?

Stronger lotions typically contain vitamin A acid (tretinoin or retinoic acid) and require a prescription and a physician's supervision. Azeleic acid and Adapalene are two powerful new prescription treatments.

For moderate to severe acne, physicians may prescribe an oral antibiotic—which patients typically take for four to five months—to reduce bacteria. Some of these medications also come in lotion or cream form.

But for the severe condition known as cystic acne, antibiotics may not be enough. Dermatologists often recommend a Vitamin A acid, such as sotretinoin—more commonly known by its brand name Accutane—which reduces sebum production.

What are the effective prescription treatments?

"Several forms of topical retinoids, azeleic acid, salicylic acid and combination therapy are the most popular acne treatment regimens prescribed today," says Dr. Cheryl

Karin Huggens

Burgess, a cosmetic dermatologist in Washington, D.C.

These popular treatments don't work, however, in severe cases, such as cystic acne or when there is evidence of active acne scarring.

But Accutane—which has cured more people of acne than any other treatment—is perhaps the most effective treatment, adds Dr. Burgess.

Before the development of Accutane, many sufferers with cystic acne had few choices for effective treatment.

What side effects do treatments have?

The most common side effect of acne lotions is dryness, says Dr. Burgess.

Accutane's side effects, which vary according to the prescribed dosage, often include general dryness of the body. Because Accutane can increase the risk of birth defects, stillbirths, and congenital abnormalities, it should not be taken during pregnancy.

What psychological scars can acne leave?

Acne sufferers can experience everything from decreased self-esteem and problems with body image to depression and anger.

"Teenagers are more vulnerable to the negative effects of acne because their self-esteem, confidence, and social interactions and identity are all in a precarious, formative stage," says Dr. John Koo, M.D., a dermatologist and psychiatrist in San Francisco.

As a result, some students withdraw socially by avoiding dating, parties, or speaking up in front of their classmates.

Another problem: Some patients "feel that their acne is not always taken seriously by their doctors, or that their doctors don't explain treatment expectations," says Dr. Koo.

These patients often get upset when their treatments fail or they don't see immediate results.

According to a study published last year in the *British Journal of Dermatology*, even mild cases of acne can be lead to emotional problems—including clinical depression and even suicide. The report encourages parents to seek medical treatment for teenagers with acne and warns against taking a "wait and see" approach. ✔

HEALTH RESOURCES

- **The American Academy of Dermatology devotes a special section of its Web site to acne information. Acnenet offers "acne updates," facts about the condition, updates on acne treatments and their possible side effects, and an interactive question-and-answer section. For more, call AAD at 888/462-DERM or visit www.aad.org.**
- **For tips on how children can lead a healthy lifestyle, parents and their kids can check the Web at Kidshealth.org. Created by a private foundation committed to providing health care for children, the site offers easy-to read information on prevention and treatment of health problems, including acne. For more, visit www.kidshealth.org.**
- **The American Psychological Association offers a variety of resources—from Web pages to publications—that can help parents and their kids deal with low self-esteem and depression. The online "Help Center" is a good place to start. For more, visit the APA Web site at www.apa.org or call 800/964-2000.**

NEA·HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

Parent Education

***Can We Talk?*, a series of four interactive workshops developed by NEA Health Information Network, helps parents learn the skills they need to talk to their children about sexuality and healthy relationships. School systems, churches and other community organizations across the nation have successfully used the series. For information on how you can start the program in your school or community, visit the Web site at www.canwetalk.org or call the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200.**

Fact or Fiction

Overwhelmed by the abundance of health information reported every day by the media? Not sure what to believe or how to determine what applies to you? *Health Insight: A Consumer's Guide to Taking Charge of Health Information* can help. The consumer brochure, developed by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, is available from the NEA Health Information Network for a limited time. For more information, send E-mail to NEAHIN1@aol.com or call 800/718-8387 (call 202/822-7572 in metro Washington, D.C.).

An opportunity to learn: World AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day was founded in 1988 to strengthen the global fight against AIDS. Observed every December 1, the day encourages public support for HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs. As a member of the National World AIDS Day Advisory Committee, the NEA Health Information Network, together with more than 40 national organizations, has developed a resource booklet and poster to promote the observance. The booklet includes a media outreach guide, factsheets, lists of national and state hotlines, and information on state observances. To order copies of the resource booklet and poster, call the NEA Health Information Network at 202/822-7570.

Contact Us

For more resources, call the NEA Health Information Network toll-free hotline at 800/718-8387 or visit our new Web site at www.neahin.org.

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*Awarded to the first 26,000 teachers to build a class webpage.

Index Funds Are Hot, But Which One's Right for You?

Q: What's the best Index fund?

A: First you must be clear why you might want an index fund. Index funds have won great press over the past several years, as the Standard & Poor's Index of 500 large-company stocks has outpaced other investments.

The S&P 500 averaged gains of 30 percent a year from 1994 to the end of 1998. As a result, many investors have decided to put their money into an index fund rather than choosing an actively managed fund.

An index fund is considered "passively managed" because it simply invests in the securities that make up a particular index. There is no manager to pick and choose stocks. Securities are traded only when the index changes or when the fund needs to invest new money coming in or redeem shares that are sold.

But don't choose an S&P 500 Index fund because of spectacular past performance. Choose this indexing approach only if you believe that large-company stocks will perform well going forward.

If you do want to invest in the S&P 500, I think the best index mutual fund for you is the Vanguard 500 Index Trust. It is the oldest of the index funds, dating back to 1976. And it's also the cheapest.

That said, there are some new pieces to the index puzzle. A couple of years ago, the American Stock Exchange began trading a unit investment trust with the same make-up as the S&P 500. This trust is called a SPDR, with the nickname "spider," and it has all the advantages of the Vanguard fund and more.

The SPDR option is a little cheaper and more tax efficient, which will probably result in lower taxes if you are investing in a taxable account.

Beyond this, there are many other index options. You could buy the Vanguard Extended Market Index, which invests in all U.S. stocks except the S&P 500. Or you could buy the Vanguard Total Market, which invests in the entire U.S. stock market.

Vanguard also offers overseas indexes that invest in Europe and the Pacific and small-cap indexes.

Q: How much money do I need for a downpayment on my first house?

A: Time was when the answer to that question was easy: 20 percent. But things have changed. Today loans are available with 10 percent down, 5 percent down, and, sometimes, even with 0 percent down. Some years ago, I bought a co-op in New York City with nothing down.

The problem with these "good deals" is that you often pay for them in higher fees and other carrying costs. For example, if you put very little money down, you will probably find that your mortgage options are fewer and more costly, in the form of higher interest rates and more points. A point is an upfront fee that is equal to 1 percent of the total mortgage.

With low downpayments, lenders will require you to buy private mortgage insurance (PMI), which is insurance to protect the lender from default. This results in a stiff insurance premium that's added to your mortgage payment every month.

Some lenders offer an alternative to PMI, in the form of higher interest rates. Mortgage interest is tax deductible. PMI payments are not. Do your homework before deciding which alternative to take.

When you're just starting out, you often have to make tradeoffs, and you should just get the best deal you can. But when you have 20 percent to put down, you'll find that you can have your pick of mortgages and you won't be required to buy PMI.

Q: Should my son, a college freshman, have his own credit card?

A: That's a ticklish question but I have an answer, which was offered to me by Terry Savage, syndicated money columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and a columnist at www.moneycentral.com.

Savage says kids need to establish credit while they're in college because they will need it once they graduate to get a job, to get an apartment, to get underway in life.

Savage suggests a secured credit card, one that's attached to a bank account. So, for example, you might put $1,000 into the bank account, thereby establishing a $1,000 credit line for your son.

I like this idea because it's a way to teach your child something about budgeting and establishing credit.

You might tell him that the money you deposit is to be used for books or for plane tickets home, then let him tap into it with his credit card.

But your son should know at the outset that the bank will not allow him to go over the $1,000 limit and that you will not cough up more money if he doesn't budget well. ✔

—Mary Rowland

Mary Rowland is a regular contributor to several major financial planning magazines.

Thrifty Educator

Each month, NEA members offer their best tips for saving money at their workplace. This month's tips come from Deborah Meaux, an English teacher at Kaplan (Louisiana) High School, and Kathleen Bryant, a reading and English teacher at Lincoln (Nebraska) High School.

Deborah Meaux: At the start of the second semester, my freshmen and juniors engage in lengthy novel studies. Usually, the novels either don't appear in the adopted anthologies or are included in abridged forms. As a result, I've had to purchase, with hard-to-get funds, the needed unabridged novels. Before giving them out to students, however, I ask each student to bring in a large, heavy-duty freezer bag. I show them how to fold the bag so that the zipper portion of the bag opens on the outside of their binders and then how to press the plastic onto the rings of the binders. Then, and only then, do I issue the precious novel. Students are expected to keep their novels in the plastic bags to protect them from wear and also to ensure that each student has the novel in class when needed.

Kathleen Bryant: After attending meetings and conferences where I have been showered with colorful handouts, I gather mine and any left on the tables. I use the backs of these for printing items to post in my classroom. The bright colors catch the students' attention. Items such as bookmarks and passes can also be made from these recycled sheets. I even have students request them for doing projects.

NEA members purchase magazines through the NEA Member Benefits Magazine Service.

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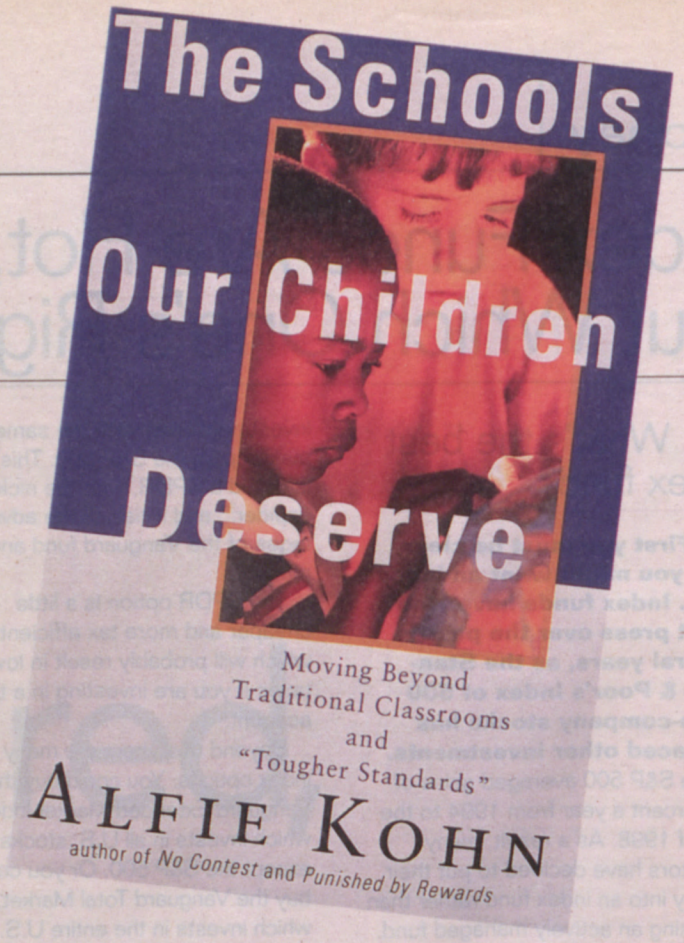
Did you know that one of the biggest threats to your financial well-being is the cost of long-term care?

Generally, neither Medicare nor Medigap nor the health insurance you have through your school district will pay for long-term care. Medicaid will pay only after you've "spent down" your savings.

You can protect yourself and your family by purchasing NEA MemberCare® Long-Term Care Insurance. This program provides options of coverage for all levels of care—home health care, adult day care, assisted living facility care, nursing home care, and respite care.

Check out the NEA Member Benefits Web Site, www.neamb.com, to find the NEA MemberCare Long-Term Care specialist in your area. Or call 800/884-2675, toll free.

What Real Learning Is All About


The Schools Our Children Deserve
Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards"
ALFIE KOHN
author of No Contest and Punished by Rewards

Instead of going back to basics, this author argues for an educational experience where students enjoy learning.

THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN DESERVE
Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards"
By Alfie Kohn.
Houghton Mifflin, $24.

As a parent of two public school students, I was heartened to read a book that dares to confront the conventional wisdom—for children's sake.

This is really three books in one. In the first seven chapters, Kohn, who grabbed headlines with an earlier book on student rewards, presents his case against "tougher standards," back to basics, core knowledge, high-stakes tests, and all the other popular "fixes" that now dominate the school reform debate.

Kohn takes on, with some special relish, the back-to-basics movement. This campaign, he argues, emphasizes achievement at the expense of learning, encouraging a focus on the rote memorization of facts, without an understanding of how these facts relate.

Kohn also takes off on the people who see standardized tests as the be-all and end-all of measuring achievement. These tests, to Kohn, are "contrived little exercises that tell us very little about the intellectual capabilities that matter most."

Kohn says that what standardized tests primarily seem to measure is how much a student has crammed into "short-term memory."

And Kohn, a former teacher, also minces no words when it comes to talking about traditional grades, which he sees as not only unhelpful, but destructive. He quotes approvingly from an educator who wrote over a half-century ago:

"If I were asked to enumerate 10 educational stupidities, the giving of grades would head the list. If I can't give a child a better reason for studying than a grade on a report card, I ought to lock my desk and go home and stay there."

Kohn's alternative? In the book's second section, he challenges readers to do exactly the opposite of what many reformers want schools to do.

Instead of superficial facts, Kohn wants deep understanding. In place of fragmentation, he asks for the integration of skills, topics, and disciplines in a meaningful context.

Most of all, what Kohn wants to see in America's public schools is active and interactive learning taking the place of student passivity and isolation.

Near the end of his new work, Kohn offers readers several questions to ask as they evaluate their own public schools:

• To what extent does a given school meet the basic psychological needs shared by all students? Some examples: the need to have some say about what you are doing, the need to feel connected to other poeple, the need to feel competent at doing things that are seen as meaningful?

• To what extent does a school meet my child's unique needs?

• To what extent is a school likely to promote the long-term goals I have for my child? Will the school help him or her to grow into a caring and responsible person, an independent lifelong learner?

• Finally, is this school more concerned with promoting democratic skills or with preparing students to take their place as workers, more interested in teaching everyone or in deciding who's better than whom?

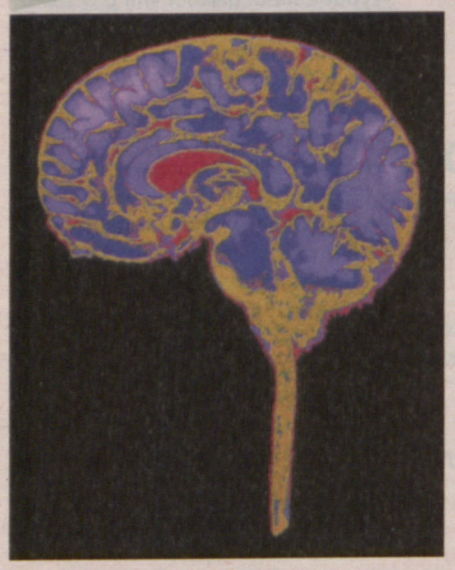
These are important questions. They may not necessarily reflect every parent's top concerns. But these are questions that need to be asked, if we are to move on down the road to the schools our children deserve. ✔

—Bill Fischer

EXCERPT

If there is a unifying theme in all these prescriptions and a common characteristic of the very best classrooms, it is that kids are taken seriously. The educators (and parents) who do the most for children are those who honor, and work hard to find out, what children already know. They start where the student is and work from there. They try to figure out what students need and where their interests lie. Superb teachers strive constantly to imagine how things looked from the child's point of view, what lies behind his questions and mistakes. All of this represents a decisive repudiation of the Old School, where, as Dewey observed, "the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself."

TVTIPS



Understanding: The Brain

The Learning Channel, Sunday, November 14

9-10 pm ET.

This documentary examines the growing amount of information that researchers, scientists, and doctors are learning about brain structure and function. Neurological experts demonstrate how the study of geniuses, autistics, and trauma victims helps them gather new information about how the brain works. The program airs during TLC's two-day Understanding Festival. See www.tlc.com for more information. ✔

Quick and Easy Ideas and Materials To Teach Academics To Nonverbal Children

Katera Murphy and Carolyn Rouse. Creative Communication Solutions, LLC. $22, plus $3 s&h. A companion video is available for $49.95. Send check or money order to 8516 W. Lake Mead, Suite 196, Las Vegas, NV 89128. For more information, E-mail cre8comsol @aol.com.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Bully Free Classrooms

Every school day, students are teased, harassed, and intimidated by other students. In *The Bully Free Classroom*, by Dr. Allan L. Beane, elementary and middle school teachers will find more than 100 prevention and intervention strategies to create classrooms where every student feels safe, accepted, and valued. $19.95 plus $4.95 s&h. Contact Free Spirit Publishing, 400 First Avenue North Ste. 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1724, 800/735-7323. On the Web: www.freespirit.com.

Peaceable Schools

In another take on safe school, the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation offers *A Peaceable School*, by senior researcher Vicky Schreiber Dill. In this book, Dill offers her vision of schools as "exporters of peace" that can teach students and parents how to solve problems nonviolently. $12 plus $3 s&h. Contact Phi Delta Kappa International, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789, 800/766-1156.

Healthy Habits

The best way to teach young children about health and safety is to make a game of it. So says Michelle O'Brien-Palmer, author of *Healthy Me: Fun Ways to Develop Good Health and Safety Habits. Healthy Me* offers creative projects, experiments, activities, and recipes, such as the "silly stretch" or the "grime-busters soap-making" activity. $12.95 plus s&h. Contact Chicago Review Press, Inc., 814 North Franklin St., Chicago, IL 60610.

Family Math

Cooking, grocery shopping, even reading the newspaper are prime opportunities for parents to teach children math skills. To encourage math practice, the Department of Education offers parents of K-5 children *Helping Your Child Learn Math* by Patsy F. Kanter and Linda B. Darby, a book of activities parents can use to help children learn algebra, geometry, statistics, and probability. Free from ED Pubs, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398, call 877/433-7827 or order online at www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html. Copies are available in alternate formats upon request.

Math and Books

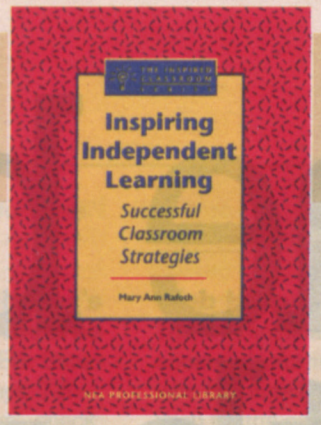
Good books are also excellent math resources. That's the premise behind *Exploring Math with Books Kids Love* by Kathryn Kaczmarski. *Exploring Math* uses books like Tuck Everlasting, Pyramid, and Jackie Robinson to enliven math lessons. $19.95 plus $4 s&h. Contact Fulcrum Publishing, 350 Indiana St. Ste. 350, Golden, CO 80401, 800/992-2908. On the Web: www.fulcrum-books.com.

Science Guide for Children

Budding scientists will love the lush illustrations and engaging descriptions of everything from DNA coding to photosynthesis in *The Oxford Children's Book of Science* by Charles Taylor and Stephen Pople. The authors explain how heat is harnessed, what pressure has to do with sound, why it's best to avoid brilliantly colored frogs, and much more. $16.95 plus $4.75 s&h. Contact Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016-4314, 800/451-7556. On the Web: www.oup.com.

Who's Who in Science

Oxford University Press offers this guide to some 1,600 scientists in world history. $14.95 plus $4.75 s&h. See contact information in above item.



NEW from the NEA Professional Library

Inspiring Independent Learning: Successful Classroom Strategies
Mary Ann Rafoth.
NEA Professional Library.
151 pp., $10.95, Item #2954-2-00-F

Teachers know that the most successful students are those who know how to learn on their own. How can you teach your students to learn without turning your class into a study skills lab? *Inspiring Independent Learning* can help. This NEA Professional Library book explains how to foster independent learning through easy, often subtle, techniques that gently place responsibility for learning in the hands of your students. The book's numerous techniques work well with students in grades K-12. Also included: activities and record forms for classroom use, plus special questionnaires and scoring guides to help you assess student metacognitive and study skills. Plus: a peer tutoring manual to help train peer tutors how to become study skills coaches. For more information or to order, check the Web at www.nea.org/books or call toll-free 800/229-4200.

EXCERPT

A middle school teacher found that students were failing quizzes on vocabulary assigned from a literature-based reading program. After several weeks of exhorting students to use study sheets containing the words, definitions, and sentences from the book, the teacher tried a new technique, as described in Chapter 4, which combined individual and small group reviews. Quiz grades shot up, and students began recognizing the vocabulary words in other contexts.

BOOKS by NEA Members

Mrs. Mo's P.E. Poems: Rhymes for Teaching

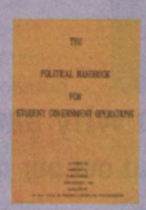
Alice L. Mohor.
A physical education teacher herself, Mohor has written a collection of movement-cue rhymes for teaching movement and wellness. This book is all in the family. Mohor's sister is the illustrator. Self-published.
$13 (includes s&h). Send checks to Alice L. Mohor, 1050 Wolfskin Rd, Arnoldsville, GA 30619.

At the Easel, A Creative Expression Of Art for Young Children

Lorie L. Keith.
Lori Keith has taught elementary special education in the Pinellas County, Florida, schools for 14 years. The author of *Nature's Rainbow of Good Nutrition*, Keith frequently conducts workshops on a variety of early childhood topics. $10, plus $1.50 s&h per item. Order from Step-by-Step Consulting, Lori Keith, 1314 Tampa Road, Suite 115, Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

Nuts and Bolts: The Teacher's Indispensible Companion

Compiled by Carol Zinn and Mike Jager.
Subtitled "200 Days of Ideas and Inspiration," this handbook offers an unusual compendium of little-known quotations, facts, vocabulary words, and journal entries, each item organized around a central theme. $12 plus, $3 s&h. To order, call (toll-free) 877/244-4109 or E-mail mjager@jeffnet.org.



The Political Handbook for Student Government Operations

Henry C. Landa.
This book provides a helpful guide to candidacies, campaigning, leadership, management, and other issues related to fair and efficient student government. Though geared toward student leaders, the book also features an advisory section for school faculty and administrators. FICOA, 146 pp. $15. Order at 5928 W. Michigan St., Wauwatosa, WI 53213.

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The exclusive NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD has regularly beaten or matched the highest rates in the nation. Just one look at the comparison chart and you can see for yourself how it stacks up against some of the biggest banks around. And best of all, you and your family† can receive higher yields with terms from 6 months to 5 years, all with a low minimum opening deposit of just $1,000.

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APY**
(as of 9/1/99)

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†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse, domestic partner and children.

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TV TIPS

Scientific American Frontiers: Natural Born Robots

PBS, Tuesday, November 2, 8-9 p.m. ET, check local listings. This documentary examines the trend in robotics to derive design inspiration from living things. The robots featured in the program are based on insects, fish, and lobsters, with the rationale that nature provides the best models for maximum speed, strength, and efficiency. The ultimate goal is to create a robot that shares the form, dexterity, and cleverness of humans. For interactive science materials, teaching guides, and program transcripts, visit www.pbs.org/saf.

Shake, Rattle & Roll

CBS, Sunday, November 7 and Wednesday, November 10, 9-11 p.m. ET. This two-part mini-series follows the fortunes of a young couple whose love story is set during the birth and evolution of rock and roll. The band they form in 1955 rises and falls against the turbulent cultural backdrop of racism, controversy, and protest created by the early Black singers, the Elvis revolution, early-sixties Motown, and the burgeoning civil rights movement. The film portrays the importance of early rock and roll as a celebration of American youth before the music took on the political weight of the Vietnam era.

Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony

PBS, Sunday, November 7 and Monday, November 8, 8-9:30 p.m. ET, check local listings. This documentary by Ken Burns explores the achievements of the two friends whose pioneering activism for women's equality expanded women's legal and educational opportunities, leading ultimately to the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote. General Motors, the film's sponsor, is distributing educational materials to high school history teachers. Visit the PBS web site at www.pbs.org/stantonanthony for more information on women's equal rights, including curriculum materials and activities for children.

The Merrow Report: A Tale of Three Cities

PBS, Friday, November 19, 10-11:30 pm, check local listings. This investigative documentary looks at three controversial education reformers—Mayor Richard M. Daley in Chicago, General John Stanford in Seattle, and former minister and lawyer David Hornbeck in Philadelphia—and the results of their very different approaches in these cities. While examining the power struggles in each case, the program considers the role of teacher unions, state and national government, and the potential for these leaders' methods to serve as models for national school reform. To order a video of this program, plus previous Merrow Reports, see page 48.

Van Gogh's Van Goghs

PBS, Wednesday, November 24, check local listings. This special takes viewers on a guided tour of the 1998 Van Gogh exhibition presented at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Presented in High Definition Television, the program includes discussion of Van Gogh's life and work. Visit www.weta.org for more information.

Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century

Fox Kids, Saturdays, 8-8:30 a.m. In this new animated series, Sherlock Holmes has been revived and rejuvenated to help Inspector Beth Lestrade of the New Scotland Yard fight an unusual crime wave. The personality of Dr. Watson, Holmes' partner, has been programmed into the brain of an android, and together they use their wits to solve the crimes of Professor James Moriarty, Holmes' old nemesis. This program has been designed with the help of educators to promote social values while helping young viewers with their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Free educator's guides with lesson plans and critical thinking activities are available; see www.foxkids.com for more information.

Blaster's Universe

CBS, Saturdays, 7-8 a.m., check local listings. This new animated series follows the 21st century adventures of Max Blaster, a bright and impetuous 12-year-old boy obsessed with science and space, and his best friend, G.C., a level-headed alien girl. They must work together to save G.C.'s universe, using logic and creativity to outsmart intergalactic outlaws. This series is designed to help children learn to think critically and to make decisions with information and logic.

The Road to the White House 2000

C-SPAN, Sundays, 6:30-7:30 and 9:30-10:30 p.m. ET. This program spotlights the upcoming Presidential race with interviews and profiles of prospective candidates from both parties, reports from the campaign trail, and coverage of the week's important election events. Resources on C-SPAN's Campaign 2000 Web site include links to party, candidate, and voting resource sites; videos of candidate speeches; and teacher guides with tips on how to encourage students to watch candidate speeches and interviews critically. Visit www.c-span.org/campaign2000 for access to these materials, online enrollment, and more C-SPAN resources. For more information on enrollment, call (202) 626-4858.

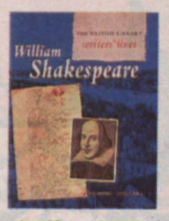
Dear America: The Winter of the Red Snow

HBO, November, check local listings. In this half-hour program, young Abby Stewart's romanticized view of war suddenly changes when General Washington and his ragged troops make winter quarters in her home in Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War. Visit www.scholastic.com for study guides, writing activities, and information on Scholastic's Dear America book series about young girls during different phases of U.S. history.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Web Help

The Internet is a great source of information but who has time to search the Web for the right Web resource? Technology expert Mark Treadwell has put together a guidebook to make the task easier. 1001 of the Best Internet Sites for Educators showcases Web sites in 11 categories from foreign language to performing arts. $32.95 plus $6 s&h from Skylight Professional Development, 2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005, 800/348-4474. On the Web at www.skylightedu.com.



The Bard's Tale

A useful resource for teachers and Shakespeare buffs alike, William Shakespeare examines Elizabethan England, London's playhouses, and his life to expose the mythology and politics that influenced his works. Included are beautiful photographs, antique maps, family trees, and portraits that illustrate Shakespeare's impact on the past and the present. $22.95 plus $4.75 s&h from Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 212/726-6043. Send E-mail to jbs@oup-usa.org. Online at www.oup-usa.org.

Parent Outreach

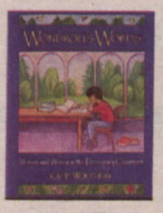
Parent Power provides teachers and schools with suggestions and guidelines on how to increase involvement and communication with parents. Included are 40 one-page reproducible essays in English and Spanish that address topics such as newsletters, grant writing, television and learning, peer conflicts, and outreach activities. A CD-ROM is included for printing and customizing the material. $35 for individual users, $75 for multiple users, plus $4 s&h from Heinemann Publishers, 88 Post Road West, PO Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881, Fax (800)847-0938. On the Web at www.heinemann.com.

In the Beginning

The first few years of teaching can be challenging and frustrating. But, Great Beginnings provides advice pertinent to new teachers, veterans, and administrators. As a collection of personal essays, this book discusses topics such as the development of student writing, supporting new teachers, school reform, and dealing with novice teacher expectations. $25.95 plus $2 s&h from National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801, 877/369-6283.

Working Children

Child Labor Is Not Cheap is a curriculum designed for grades 8-12 that explores the current work conditions children face in Latin America and provides ways for students to respond to them. (See related story on page 16.) The guide includes student work-sheets, essays on work conditions, statistics on child labor, and suggestions for finding more information. This is just one in a library of activist-oriented programs. $14.95 from the Resource Center of the Americas, 3019 Minnehaha, Minneapolis, MN 55406, 800/452-8382, Fax 612/627-9450, E-mail bookstore@americas.org. Online at www.americas.org.



Words, Words, Words!

Teaching students how to write is one of the most difficult and most time-consuming tasks that teachers face. In *Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom*, teachers are shown how to teach writing through reading. Included are suggestions for literature and activities to facilitate this process. $22.95 plus $2 s&h from National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801, 800/369-6283. On the Web at www.ncte.org.

Global Opportunities

Interested in teaching in a foreign country? Global Volunteers offers a variety of international and domestic programs in which you can teach or volunteer in activities such as constructing a community center in Ghana or caring for at-risk babies in Romania. No experience is necessary. Prices range from $450 to $2,395, depending on destination and length of stay. A free catalog is available from Global Volunteers, 375 E. Little Canada Road, St. Paul, MN 55117, 800/487-1074. E-mail at email@globalvolunteers.org. On the Web at www.globalvolunteers.org.

High-Tech Parents

Designed to help parents "get a grip" on technology, ParenTech kits include three 16-page Parent Guides, an interactive CD-ROM, and the Web site, full of resources, research, and advice on how technology is changing schools, careers, and society. ParenTech kits include information on how to connect parents and schools, hold adult computer classes, and create computer loan programs. Free from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1900 Spring Road, Suite 300, Oak Brook, IL 60523, 800/356-2735, Fax 630/571-4716. Order at 877/298-7273. On the Web at www.parentech.org.

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VIDEO

Bravo!

As an introduction to the literary classic or as a model for school plays, The Island of Dr. Moreau combines excellent acting, elegant costuming, and pertinent commentary in this performance by the Tarpoot Theatre. This is the sixth video produced by Globalstage aimed toward children. Other productions include Pinocchio, Frankenstein, Cyrano, Far From the Madding Crowd and Playing From the Heart. $27 each or $135 for subscription of six, plus $3.95 s&h from Globalstage Productions, Inc., 465 California, Suite 525, San Francisco, CA 94104, 888/324-5623. Send E-mail to globalstge@aol.com. For online ordering and information go to www.globalstage.net.

Visual Guidance

Is cafeteria food safe? Interested in helping children and adults in need? Ready to take control of your future? For elementary to college-level students, Video Placement Worldwide offers free videos and work packets to help teachers help students. Game Plan for Food Safety, 360 Degrees of Possibilities, Share Your Vision, Considering Your Options: Information on Abstinence and Contraceptive Choices for Teenagers, and Master Your Future are five new videos in a library of more than 30 programs. Free from Video Placement Worldwide, 25 Second Street North, Suite 120, St. Petersburg, FL 33701, 727/823-9595, Fax 800/358-5218. Send E-mail to vpw@vpw.com. On the Web at www.vpw.com.

False Alarm?

Investigating education and youth, The Merrow Report looks into the shortage of teachers that America's schools are facing in its newest video, Teacher Shortage: False Alarm? The Merrow Report has also covered sex education, homeschooling, school vouchers, and the value of college in its series. $19.95 plus $3 s&h from The Merrow Report, 6 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016, 212/725-7000,

Fax 212/725-2433. Send E-mail to merrow@pbs.org. On the Web at www.pbs.org/merrow.

Traveling Through Time

Travel with A.J. and his crew across time and space to meet some of the most influential people, places, and events in world history. Entertaining and educational, episodes include Jackie Robinson & Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Jefferson & Winston Churchill, Amerigo Vespucci & Sir Edmund Hillary, Marie Curie & Thomas Edison, and Aristotle & Leonardo da Vinci. $9.95 each, $49.95 five pack, plus $5.95 s&h from Bridgestone Multimedia Group, 300 North McKemy, Chandler, AZ 85226, 800/523-0988, Fax 602/940-8924. On the Web at www.bridgestonemultimedia.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Know Your World

From November 14-20, the 13th annual Geography Awareness Week will take place with this year's theme of Geography and Technology: Think the World of Your Community. Teachers and students across the country will take part in activities and events designed to see how technology defines the idea of community. Additional activities and information are provided on the National Geographic Web site at www.nationalgeographic.com/education/gaweek.

Holiday Season of Conscience

As the holiday season approaches, the National Labor Committee and the People of Faith Network kick off the Third Annual Holiday Season of Conscience. While pressure is focused on Wal-Mart, the largest private sector employer in the U.S., both organizations want an end to child labor and sweatshop abuses. They are campaigning for full public disclosure of factories used by multinational companies around the world, a living wage for workers, and respect for human and worker rights. For more information contact the People of Faith Network, 85 S. Oxford Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217, 718/625-2819, Fax 718/625-3491, E-mail pofnetwork@aol.com or the National Labor Committee, 275 Seventh Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10001, 212/242-3002, Fax 212/242-3821, E-mail nlc@nlcnet.org. On the Web at www.nlcnet.org.

Working Together

"The Collaborative Challenge" identifies effective and coordinated efforts by general education and special education teachers to help students with learning disabilities succeed in the general classroom setting. Formed between the Schwab Foundation for Learning, the Association of California Administrators, and CalSTAT (a project developed by the California Department of Education), this program advances effective special education projects by promoting each school's "model program," issuing grants, and providing schools with fiscal resources to continue and expand on their success. The four model projects chosen this year are Elk Grove Unified School District, Iron Horse Middle School, Mariposa Elementary School, and Richmond Elementary School. Teachers and administrators of each school receive a $10,000 grant from the Schwab Foundation and additional fiscal resources to cover training and travel expenses, in order to share their programs with other schools in California and across the country. For more information, log on to www.schwablearning.org.

WEB WINNERS

Animal Habitats

For elementary school kids, Animal Habitats' interactive map allows children to click on four geographical habitats in order to learn about some of the animals living in each environment. From owls to tarantulas to wallabies, kids can learn about each animal's habitat, what it eats, and an interesting fact about it. The interactive map requires the Shockwave plug-in, but it is not necessary for full enjoyment of the site. Animal Habitats is located at www.wcs.org/kids. Interested parents and teachers can connect to www.wcs.org for curriculum suggestions and information on wildlife conservation.

Live and Teach Abroad

Interested in living abroad, improving your teaching techniques, or just looking for a change in scenery? Then teacher exchange is the thing for you. Teachers Helping Teachers helps facilitate the exchange process with teacher exchange experiences, application guidelines, and posted messages from international teachers interested in exchange. Visit online at www.angelfire.com/ca/zael/index.html.

The Fantastic Forest

In this interactive forest, kids discover the importance of plants and animals in the global environment. Kids can explore six different locations and create their own forest scene with trees, ferns, and rocks. Requires Netscape Navigator 3.0 (or higher) or Internet Explorer 3.0 (or higher) with the Shockwave and QuickTime VR plug-ins. On the Web at www.nationalgeographic.com/forest/index.html.

Agayuliyararput

Titled Agayuliyararput or "Our Way of Making Prayer," this exhibit, by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, displays Yup'ik masks and ceremonial materials. Now on the Web, the project, developed by a team of native Yup'ik people, researchers and museum professionals, is available to everyone wanting to learn about this Southwestern Alaskan culture. On the Web at www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/features/yupik.

Superconductivity 101

For those who know nothing (or for those who just want to learn more), Superconductors.org explains the purpose, uses, and future of

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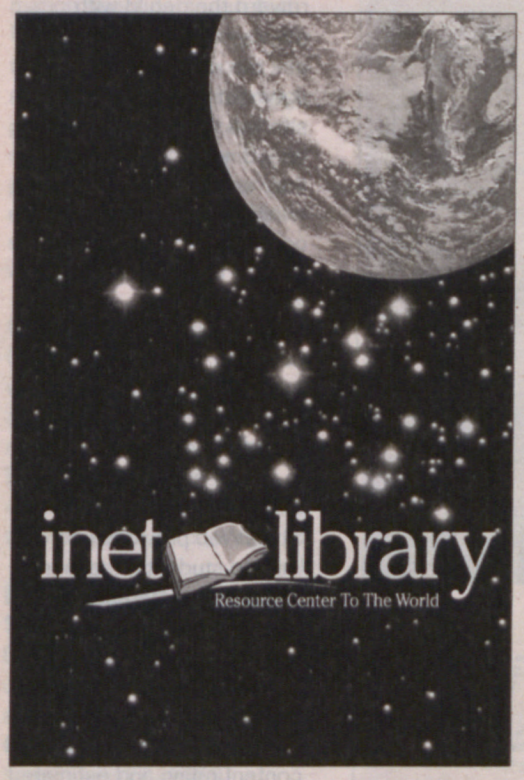

Finally! A well-organized, easy-to-use internet library of over 70,000 sites for educators and students.

- All sites reviewed by Dr. Dennis Jensen and his staff of educators.
- Daily content & security checks eliminates the chance of pornographic or inappropriate material ever reaching the user.
- Aligns educational links to current credible and usable curriculum in the classroom.
- Online legal center with e-mail responses by an attorney of education law.
- Teacher lesson plans for K-12 and online educational forums.

For the next two weeks, follow these easy instructions:
1. Go to **www.inetlibrary.com** & click on the members button.
2. Your access code is **"neatoday"** & your password is **"november"**.

superconductivity. Interested chemistry and physics teachers, as well as interested students, will find a wealth of information from research on high-speed trains and microchips to where to buy superconductivity demonstration kits. Log on to superconductors.org to find out more.

Polar Pairs
A memory game perfect for teaching children how to use a computer mouse and facts about Arctic animals. Created by the Smithsonian Institution, Arctic Wildlife Portfolio connects players to information about each animal. Play on the Web at www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/game/index.html.

The Explorers' Club
From the Environmental Protection Agency, this site contains information about how children can recycle and protect wildlife, why the environment needs protecting, and interactive games. In one game, the player assumes the role of City Manager and must implement recycle and reuse programs to clean up Dumptown. In another interactive game, you are a detective searching for words, linking raw materials to their products, and solving puzzles about recycling. Fun for children of all ages, all the lessons and activities help clean up and protect the environment. On the Web at www.epa.gov/kids.

Internet Library
The INET Library contains more than 11,000 books, 3,000 links to periodicals, encyclopedia/ reference books, college/ career information, teacher lesson plans, and a searchable database of over 54,000 schools. All of the information is updated daily and is available to students, teachers, libraries, and schools. The INET Library costs $59.79 for individual or family use. Please call 888/841-4790 for pricing information for school, library, and institution use. A free tour is available at www.inetlibrary.com.

AllowanceNet
Encouraging communication between parents and kids, AllowanceNet teaches the basics of earning, saving, spending, and managing money that many of today's youth and adults lack. Working with their parents, kids ages 6 to 14 develop a weekly list of activities to be completed such as "make the bed," "help in the garden," and "do the dishes." Parents can reward their child with money or Diditz, or simply use the program as a management system. Kids on site will not be able to spend more money than they've earned. In a fun twist, kids are given the opportunity to assign and reward their parents for various activities such as "pick me up ON TIME from practice." On the Web at www.allowancenet. com.

StudyWeb
A search engine specifically for online researching, StudyWeb provides useful links to students, teachers, and parents interested in information on everything from Criminology to Teacher Resources. Search results include a brief description of the site in addition to a visual content rating and estimated grade level. On the Web at www.studyweb.com.

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*For qualified applicants only. Loan commitment will be subject to the terms and conditions contained in the loan commitment letter for this program. Call a mortgage counselor for details. **This offer is only valid on loan applications made on or after January 1, 1999 and closed on or prior to March 31, 2000 through this program. Offer is subject to loan approval and other terms and conditions. This offer is not available on home equity loans and lines of credit. Call 1-800-632-4968 for additional "Driveaway Getaway" vacation package details and terms and conditions. The "Driveaway Getaway" vacation package is a program of MMS Incentives, which is solely responsible for the administration and all aspects of the vacation package. Norwest Mortgage is in no way responsible or liable for the services. Equal Housing Lender.

Branches: Enter DM# DMC0063299V in LIS. Refer to Affinity Programs At-A-Glance for additional details.

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Art Online
ArtMuseum.Net brings the art exhibit experience to your personal computer, complete with a museum store. Presented by Intel, an interactive first-person display allows you to move, look, and learn at a museum art exhibit. With the click of a button, you can learn about each painting's historical context, cultural impact, and artistic composition. On display now is The American Century: Art and Culture, 1900-2000, which is currently exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Also exhibited online is Van Gogh's Van Goghs, at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. This site requires Live Picture Viewer and Real Audio G2 plug-ins. On the Web at www.artmuseum.net.

Youth In Action
Providing resources for educators and students, the Youth In Action network links you to sites where students can get involved and make a positive change on the environment, youth rights, human rights, and more. With online discussions, action alerts, and surveys, youth can get involved immediately. Go to www.mightymedia.com/act.

Pet Pals
For dog-lovers, cat-lovers, and animal-lovers, AcmePet.com has medical, nutritional, and general information about pets, purr-fect for biology and anatomy teachers and pet-owners alike. Discussions of current pet legislation and policy debates, pet E-mail, and pictures of our furry friends are all part of this adorable site. On the Web at www.acmepet.com.

Out of this World
On IntelligentChild.com, kids will find answers to their questions about planets, the moon, spacewalks, and Earth, as well as science experiments for teachers. Go to www.intelligentchild.com.

Educational Screen Saver
Delivering instant news updates, Internet resources, and lesson plans, Educast directly links your computer screen to educational resources across the United States. Educast utilizes information and resources from sites such as the U.S. Department of Education, Education Week, The New York Times and PBS Online. Educast is available for free download at educast.com.

Lesson Stop
Stop struggling over lesson plans! Go to LessonStop.org where sample lesson plans for every subject, advice on how to create lesson plans, and over 500 helpful links to other Web sites are collected. In addition teachers can subscribe to the LessonStop newsletter with updated information and resources. Log on to www.lessonstop.org for these free resources that help K-12 teachers use the Internet in their classrooms.

Computers In Time
Organized by year, ComputerHistory.org outlines every major development, invention, and moment in the history of computers from 1945-1990. Accompanied by pictures, the detailed descriptions of computer scientists, components, and languages share information and insights with interested students and teachers. Included in the Web site are histories of the Internet and Microprocessors as well. On the Web at www.computerhistory.org.

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Save with the New Introductory APR of 2.9%.

Best of all, you'll enjoy a new low 2.9% introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on cash advance checks and balance transfers and a fixed APR of 13.99% for purchases† And, the annual fee for the NEA Credit Card with Travel Rewards is just $30†

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Travel Benefits	NEA Travel Rewards All Major Airlines	AMEX Delta SkyMiles® Delta Airlines	Citibank AAdvantage® American Airlines	First Chicago Mileage Plus® United Airlines
* Free round-trip ticket in the 48 contiguous United States	**15,000** points	25,000 points	25,000 points	25,000 points
Free round-trip ticket to Europe	**35,000** points	50,000 points	40,000 – 60,000 points (changes seasonally)	50,000 points
Blackout dates	None	Major Holidays	Major Holidays	Major Holidays

For the NEA Travel Rewards Program, the corresponding maximum dollar value for a ticket for the award levels shown above are: 15,000 pts/$500; 35,000 pts/$1,000. For travel within a single U.S. zone, the award level and corresponding maximum dollar value is 10,000 pts/$300; for travel within North America and Mexico: 25,000 pts/$600. There may be up to two connections per flight. Information shown in chart is accurate as of 9/1/99, based on an independently conducted telephone survey.

†The annual fee for the NEA Travel Rewards Credit Card is $30. The Annual Percentage Rates (APRs) for purchases and ATM and Bank cash advances are 13.99% for the NEA Travel Rewards *Platinum Plus*℠ card or 14.99% for the Travel Rewards School Days card. The current promotional APR offer for cash advance checks and balance transfers made with either account is 2.9% through your first statement closing date commencing the month after the account is opened. Thereafter, the APR that will be applied to new and outstanding cash advance balances (consisting of cash advance checks and balance transfer transactions) will be 13.99% for the NEA Travel Rewards *Platinum Plus* account or 14.99% for the Travel Rewards School Days account. Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances: 2% of each cash advance ($2 minimum, $10 maximum). Transaction fee for credit card cash advance checks and balance transfers:1% of each cash advance ($2 minimum, $10 maximum). Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase ($2 minimum, $10 maximum). The transaction fees for two specially designated credit card cash advance checks are waived. **MBNA may allocate your payments to balances (including new transactions) with lower APRs before balances with higher APRs. Cash advances and balance transfers may not be used to pay off or pay down any other MBNA account. Cash advances obtained through a Bank or ATM transaction are not eligible for the promotional 2.9% APR offer.**

You will automatically be considered for an NEA *Platinum Plus* account, with a minimum credit line of $5,500. If you do not qualify for the NEA *Platinum Plus* account, you will automatically be considered for an NEA School Days account, with a minimum credit line of $500.

The NEA is not involved in the credit decision process: standard credit procedure is followed. All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America. Absolutely NO membership dues are used to market this program.

Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse, domestic partner and children.

The NEA Credit Card Program® has been developed for NEA members and their families only. If a member decides not to renew his/her membership, that person and their family will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates, fees and special promotions (including Travel Rewards) offered through the NEA Credit Card Program. If eligible, a replacement card will be offered. This credit card program is issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

***NEA Travel Rewards Highlights of Terms and Conditions:** These are highlights of the complete Terms and Conditions of the NEA Travel Rewards program ("Program"). The Program offers air travel, auto rental and hotel accommodation rewards in exchange for Travel Rewards *Point* earnings *("Point(s)")*.

Air travel rewards consist of a scheduled round-trip ticket for travel within or between two designated zones of the lower 48 states (Zone 1 – locations within the Eastern and Central time zones; Zone 2 – locations within the Mountain and Pacific time zones); plus travel from Alaska and Hawaii. The number of *Points* and corresponding maximum dollar value of tickets ("MDV") required for travel are: for travel wholly contained within Zone 1 or Zone 2: 10,000/$300; between Zones 1 and 2: 15,000/$500; to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, the Bahamas or Bermuda: 25,000/$600; to Europe (and any other international destination which may be available): 35,000/$1,000.

MDV includes taxes and destination fees. Tickets will be Economy class and will be the lowest available published fare at the time of booking. Whenever possible a direct flight will be booked; there is a limit of two connections. Actual date and time of travel are subject to availability. You may select a carrier and/or upgrade to first class travel: if you choose either, you may charge the cost difference to your *Travel Rewards* credit card and earn *Points* for the transaction. Additional terms apply. All reservations and ticketing must be at least 21 days before travel date. All travel must include a Saturday night stay. For international travel, your stay must be at least seven days but no more than 30 days. Other restrictions apply. Common Carrier Travel Accident Insurance coverage is applicable to any airline ticket obtained with *Points* and/or paid for with your *Travel Rewards* credit card. See your card benefits materials for coverage details.

Automobile rental rewards are for **midsize** vehicles with pickup and return to the same rental location anywhere within the United States. Advance reservations of at least seven days are required and are subject to availability. You must meet all credit, age, and driver requirements in effect at the time and place of rental. 2,000 *Points* are needed for each single day rental (MDV: $60, including tax); 1,000 *Points* for a single weekend day rental (MDV: $35, including tax) and 9,000 *Points* for a seven-day rental period (MDV: $300, including tax). Optional charges are your responsibility. Other conditions apply. Your credit card supplemental collision damage deductible waiver coverage is available.

Hotel accommodation rewards are valid at participating properties in the United States. Advance reservations of at least seven days are required and are subject to availability. There is no minimum stay requirement. Rewards are valid for a standard single- or double-occupancy room with a nightly rate, including tax. Personal, optional and incidental expenses are your responsibility. These are the current requirements for a hotel accommodation reward: for a nightly room rate up to $110: 3,000 *Points* and for a room rate up to $200: 5000 *Points*.

You may accrue an annual maximum of 70,000 *Points*. Your *Points* may not be combined with anyone else's *Points*. *Points* will expire five years from the end of the year in which they are earned. *Points* have no cash value. *Points* may be earned and redeemed only if your account is in good standing. **Earn one *Point* for every dollar in Net Purchases charged to the account. "Net Purchase" means the purchase of goods or services by you and your authorized user(s) made with the NEA *Travel Rewards* credit card, less credits and plus or minus any adjustments. Net Purchases does not include finance charges; cash advance transactions; any balance(s) permissibly transferred between MBNA accounts; cash advances redesignated as purchases; the purchase of money orders, wire transfers, bets, lottery tickets, or casino gaming chips; unauthorized charges; credit life insurance premiums; late or over-the-credit-limit fees; and other fees and charges assessed on your account. Fractions of dollar values of Net Purchases will be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.**

There are no exchanges or refunds for no-shows or partially used rewards. Lost, stolen, or otherwise destroyed travel documents may not be reissued or replaced. *Points* may not be combined with any other discounts, special rates, promotions, or other rewards programs offered by MBNA or any other entity, including airline frequent flyer programs or airline credit card programs. No retroactive *Points* will be awarded.

MBNA reserves the right to change any or all of the terms, benefits, or conditions of participation in this program, including, but not limited to, withdrawing, limiting or modifying any reward or increasing the number of *Points* required for any reward. Violations of the terms of this program may result in liability for damages, termination of program eligibility, loss of *Points*, and revocation of issued but unused rewards.

The NEA Travel Rewards Program is administered by Palladian Travel Services℠, a division of MBNA America Bank (Delaware). Palladian Travel Services is a California Seller of Travel (Reg. No. 2041375-40), is registered with the State of Florida as a Seller of Travel (Reg. No. ST-30109) and is a Registered Ohio Travel Agency (Reg. No. 87890234). MBNA America Bank, N.A., its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates, including MBNA America Bank (Delaware) and Palladian Travel Services (collectively "MBNA") shall not be liable for any bodily harm and/or property damage which may result from your participation in the Program. In the event of any cancellation, irregularity or mishap affecting reward travel or reservations, MBNA will not be responsible for any expenses incurred due to such event(s).

You are responsible for determining any tax liability which may result from your participation in this program. The terms of this program are subject to government approval and are void where prohibited by law.

MBNA America is the exclusive issuer and administrator of the *Platinum Plus* Credit Card Program.

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The Ancient Indus Valley

A good introduction to history and archaeology, the Ancient Indus Valley is dedicated to every aspect of the ancient Indus civilization. Students can learn about the Indus script, view a slide show, and take a 3-D tour of Harappa, an Indus city located in modern India. Interactive with beautiful pictures and resolution, this Web site is visually and mentally stimulating. On the Web at www.harappa.com.

Tortoise and the Hare And More

An old story with a new design, the *Tortoise and the Hare* is an online storybook. Ideal for young children. Clicking on the green arrow moves the reader through the story page by page. The Internet Public Library offers other online children's stories such as *Mother Goose, The Fisherman and his Wife,* and *Mousie's Adventures.* On the Web at www.ipl.org/youth/StoryHour.

Y2Kidz

Y2Kidz gets kids thinking about their futures in the 21st century. By creating a time capsule and predicting the future, kids interact with each other in this online environment. In addition, Y2Kidz teaches kids about how to eat healthy, the effects of tobacco and ultraviolet rays, and how to make an impact in their community by cleaning up the environment and schools. Presented by the American Cancer Society, the site also links kids to more detailed information on the ACS Web site at www.cancer.org. Y2Kidz is on the Web at www.y2kidz.com.

Books for Kids

Want your students to be inspired? Try pointing them to the Web and a place call KidPub. There they'll find 36,000 children's stories at www.kidpub.org/kidpub. And there's a place on the site for your students to submit their own literary jewels.

Back in Time

You can get lost in time at www.hyperhistory.com. And that's a good thing because this site features 3,000 years of world history presented through a vast array of maps and charts, timelines, and images.

Time Again

So you don't lose track of time, try this site for The Official U.S. Time. Go to the Web at www.time.gov. There you can click on a particular time zone and find out instantly what time it is.

GRANTS

Toyota International Teacher Program

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. offers a fully funded study program in Japan for 50 secondary school teachers. Administered by the Institute of International Education in Washington, D.C., teachers visit primary and secondary schools, tour historical and cultural cities in Japan, visit recycling and environmental protection programs, and explore these relationships with that of industry and society. Teachers will travel in mid-June 2000, visiting several cities in Japan including Tokyo, Kyoto, and Toyota City. All direct program costs, including travel, lodging and meals for the 12-day excursion, will be covered by TMS. Eligible teachers must teach grades 9-12, have a minimum of three year's teaching experience by June 2000, and teach in either California, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan,

It's just what I wanted.

Yeah, right.

You know that look on your colleagues' faces when they peel back the wrapping paper at the holiday gift exchange—to reveal yet another jar of bath salts or a too-colorful tie.

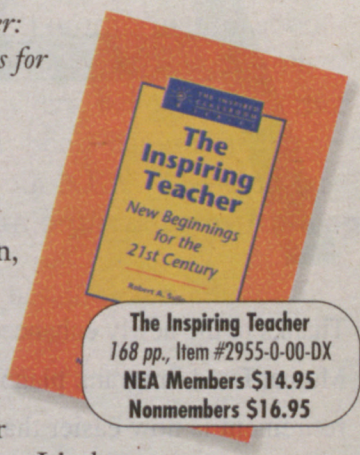
This year, give your colleagues a chance to be delighted instead of polite. Make your school's holiday gift exchange meaningful with books from the NEA Professional Library.

Bright Ideas
56 pp., Item #2153-3-00-DX
NEA Members $4.50

If you've drawn a new teacher's name, why not give *Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers*? It's chock-full of the tips that veteran teachers know and all new teachers need.

DON'T FORGET
to treat yourself. Order any of these books by December 15 and receive a **FREE NEA lapel pin**—the NEA Professional Library's gift to you!

For your more seasoned colleagues, try *The Inspiring Teacher: New Beginnings for the 21st Century,* a new book that's sure to get creative juices flowing.



The Inspiring Teacher
168 pp., Item #2955-0-00-DX
NEA Members $14.95
Nonmembers $16.95

Plants, Animals
90 pp., Item #1880-X-00-DX
NEA Members $6.95
Nonmembers $7.95

Or, just for fun, there's *Plants, Animals, & Humid Beans,* a collection of rib-tickling humor from NEA members. It's the perfect stocking stuffer for the custodian who keeps your classroom sparkling.

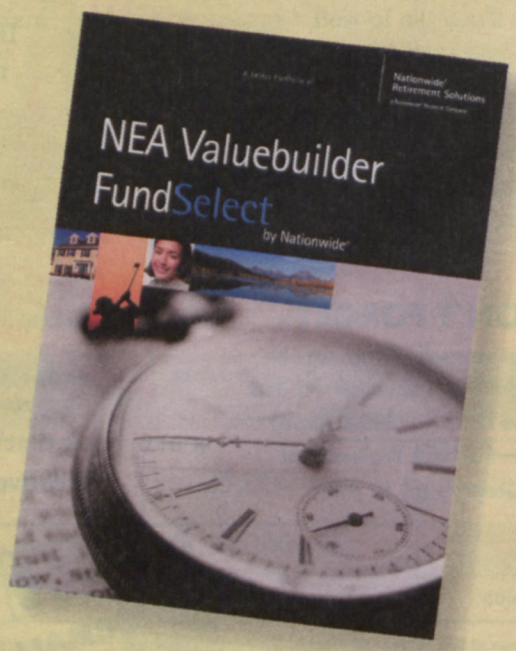
This holiday season, choose gifts that hold special meaning for educators. Your colleagues will really mean it when they say, **"It's just what I wanted."**

Want more ideas?
Go to www.nea.org/books and click on "Gifts."

Skip the parking space crunch at the mall.
Call 800/229-4200 or order online at www.nea.org/books.

Q. How will I ever be able to enjoy a comfortable retirement on my savings and pension alone?

A.



Thanks to the newly enhanced NEA Valuebuilder® Mutual Fund Program, planning for a successful retirement is now easier than you think. This exclusive NEA program features a wide selection of well-known funds, a low minimum deposit, and most importantly, professional investment guidance to help you select the right funds to meet your long-term goals. So stop worrying about how to prepare for your retirement. Give us a call today, and we'll help figure it out – FREE!

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Securities are offered by Nationwide Investment Services Corporation, Member NASD; Nationwide Investment Svcs./Corporation, Member NASD (only in MI). The NEA Valuebuilder FundSelect® investments are executed, cleared and held by Nationwide Advisory Services, Inc. For more complete information about the new NEA Valuebuilder FundSelect® Investment Account, including all charges and expenses, please obtain a prospectus. Prospectuses are available from your NISC representative. Please read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money.

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Missouri or West Virginia (states where Toyota has major facilities). Applications are available now and include an applicant data form, personal/professional background information, a statement of intent, and references. No prior Japanese language or culture experience is necessary. Deadline is January 14, 2000. For information or an application, call 877/832-2457 or E-mail toyotateach@iie.org. On the Web at www.iie.org/pgms/ toyota.

JUST OUT

Drug Stopper

A new antidrug comic series called "Fast Lane" is headed to most 9- to 14-year olds, courtesy of Marvel Comics and a coalition of leading youth publications, working with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. The new "Spider-Man" antidrug comic series features the webbed superhero as he guides student journalists through an action-packed lesson on how to recognize and resist drug images in the media. The scripts and plot concepts for these series were put together by a panel of experts who work in the area of media literacy, helping kids become discerning media consumers. The comics, as well as a "Fast Lane" poster and Spider-Man computer screensaver graphs will be downloadable to all youth online at the Campaign's Freevibe.com Web site. In addition, Marvel's Own Internet site will be linked to Freevibe to provide greater youth access to accurate drug information and kid-friendly entertainment.

Young Laborers

For millions of teens across the country, a return to school also means a return to after-school employment. Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that this year 70 children will die and 200,000 will be injured on the job because of unsafe work conditions. For this reason it is important that teens and their parents become familiar with the federal rules regulating child labor. For instance, did you know that 14- and 15-year-olds are not permitted to work more than three hours on school days and no more than 18 hours total per school week, though 16- and 17-year-olds may work unlimited hours? For complete information on federal child labor rules, contact the United States Department of Labor Safe Work/Safe Kids initiative at 202/693-0023 or on the Web at www.dol.gov/dol/esa.

TIME for Teachers

Time for Kids, the classroom arm of *TIME* magazine has launched *Time for Teachers*. The publication, distributed four times a year, will be mailed to the over 100,000 teachers who subscribe to *TIME for Kids*.

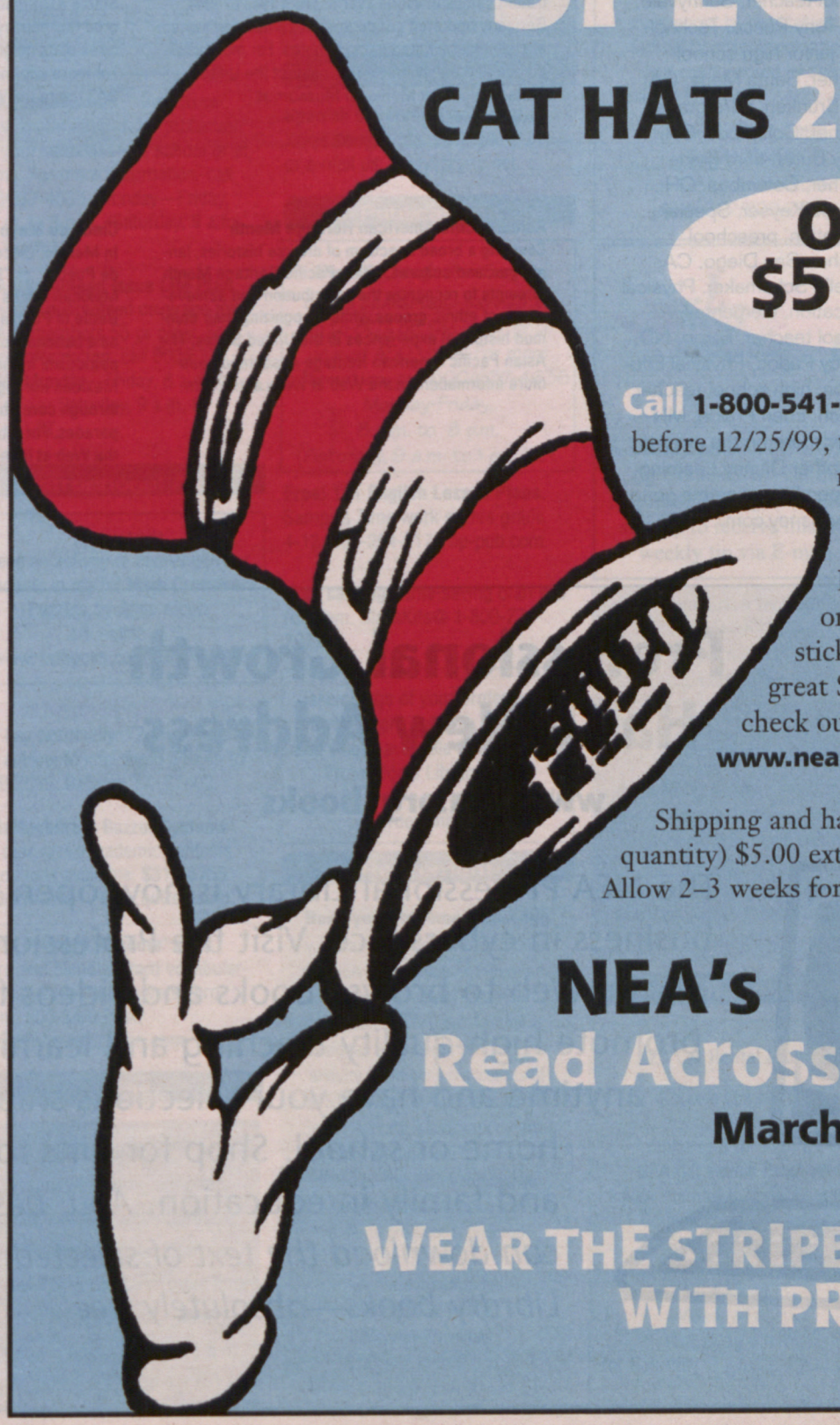
The first issue, just out, focuses on student motivation, blending in research, teaching tips, and advice from classroom teachers.

Time for Teachers, in partnership with Chevy Malibu, is also sponsoring the new Teaching Excellence Awards. These Awards will honor extraordinary teachers who incorporate quality and innovation into their instructional practices. The grand prize is a 2000 Chevy Malibu and $2,000 for the winner's classroom. The winner and runners-up will be profiled in the April 28, 2000 issue of *Time for Teachers*. Entries are due Feb. 1. To learn more about the Teaching Excellence Awards, call 800/777-8600.

HOLIDAY SPECIAL

CAT HATS 20% off

Only $5 Each



Call 1-800-541-8446 or 513-396-8096 before 12/25/99, the day the Grinch will raise the price! Credit Cards only.

For information about ordering Seuss buttons, stickers, balloons and other great Seuss paraphernalia, check out NEA's "Cat-alog" at www.nea.org/readacross/catalog.

Shipping and handling (on any quantity) $5.00 extra.
Allow 2–3 weeks for delivery.

NEA's Read Across America

March 2, 2000

WEAR THE STRIPES WITH PRIDE!

Resources

AWARDS

Disney Winners

On November 14, the Disney Learning Partnership will present the 1999 American Teacher Awards in Los Angeles. The show will air live on the Disney Channel at 8 p.m. ET and be replayed several times in the weeks after the initial telecast.

The awards recognize teachers for their ability to inspire students, colleagues, and communities.

Here are the NEA members who are among the honories. From this group, winners will be announced in 13 different categories.

Susan Haas, kindergarten teacher, Riverside, CA; Richelle Selleck, kindergarten teacher, Billings, MT; William Coate, sixth grade teacher, Madera, CA; Kelvin Chun, Technology, elementary school teacher, Honolulu, HI; Catherine Knoop, Science, elementary school teacher, Circleville, OH; Charles Botticell, Science, middle school teacher, Littleton, CO; Paul Crips, Science, middle school teacher, Cheyenne, WY; Jessica Barlow Daniels, English, eighth grade teacher, Carson City, NV; Dorothy Kohrherr, Social Studies, eighth grade teacher, Monmouth, NJ; Dan Miekstyn, History, middle school teacher, Ann Arbor, MI; Adam Schultheis, Orchestra, middle school teacher, Henderson, NV; Russ Weaver, Instrumental Music, middle school teacher, Kissimmee, FL; Gordon Hahn, Chemistry, Physics, Physiology, high school teacher, Glascow, MT; Terrie Saunders, AP Literature, high school teacher, Omaha, NE; Gilberto Zepeda, Theater, high school teacher, San Juan, TX; Keri Wormald, Theater, high school teacher, Richmond, VA; Vonneke Miller, Science, middle school teacher, Sunnyvale, CA; Brenda Goldstein, Science, middle school teacher, Sunnyvale, CA; Andrew Lucia, Science, middle school teacher, Sunnyvale, CA; Tony Ponce, Technology, junior high school teacher, Santa Maria, CA; Eva Brunken, third grade teacher, Columbus, OH; Mary Butts, third grade teacher, Columbus, OH; Maggie Keyser, Special Education, preschool teacher, San Diego, CA; Janelle Schumaker, Physical Education, elementary school teacher, Fargo, ND; Nancy Pudos, Physical Education, high school teacher, Coach, Eden Prairie, MN.

For more on the awards and other Disney Learning Partnership programs go to www.disney.com.

DIVERSITY Calendar

Here are few listings to help you plan school activities for the many ethnic celebrations taking place in the next few months.

March

National Women's History Month

Enacted in 1987, National Women's History Month celebrates the contributions and impact women have made on our nation and in our lives. For more information about Women's History Month events and activities, contact The National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492, 707/838-6000. On the Web at www.nwhp.org.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, March 21

Observed by the United Nations as part of the program of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, this day remembers the killing of 69 South African protestors in a town called Sharpville in 1960. The United Nations commemorates the anniversary of this event as a call for the world's nations to work together to end racial discrimination. For more, connect to www.un.org.

April

Yom Ha-Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, April 13

Yom Ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, is a memorial to the Jewish people who died in concentration camps in World War II. From 1940 to 1944, Germany operated concentration camps and systematically exterminated camp inmates. For more information and an online exhibit, contact the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at www.ushmm.org.

Pan-American Day, April 4

Celebrated on April 4th, Pan-American Day brings together the 21 North, Central, and South American countries comprising the Organization of American States (OAS). Since 1931, the United States has honored this holiday by celebrating the customs and cultures of its neighbors in Central and South America. For more information about Pan-American Day and OAS, go to the Web at www.oas.org.

May

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

Covering a broad spectrum of diverse histories, languages, and cultures, Asian Pacific Heritage Month attempts to recognize the contribution and achievements of ethnic groups while recognizing their common historical experiences in the United States. The Asian Pacific American Heritage Association has more information on the Web at www.aahm.com.

Cinco de Mayo, May 5

In Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is called "Dia de la Batalla de Puebla" or "Puebla Battle Day." On May 5th, 1862, Mexican forces defeated French invaders at the Battle of Puebla and Mexicans now celebrate the day as a national holiday representing Mexico's unity and patriotism. In the United States, American citizens of Mexican heritage celebrate their heritage on this day. through ceremonies, speeches, festivals, dances, and parades. For a brief history on Cinco de Mayo, go to the Web at latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/demo/cinco.html.

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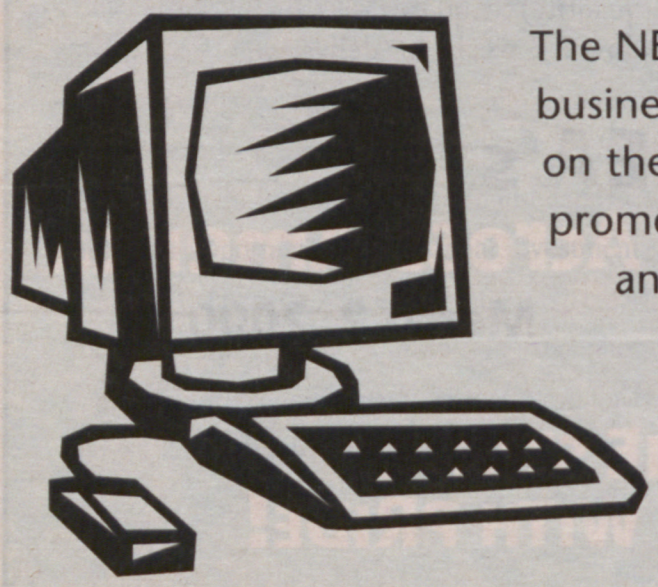

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New Partnership for Older Women's Health

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in the Light Lane

In Honor of Veteran's Day

Students frequently look at holidays as just another day off from school. Last year, in preparation for Veteran's Day, I asked my kindergartners if they knew what a veteran is.

"Sure!" one student confidently replied. "He's the guy who takes care of your cats and dogs."

Donna Scheer
Falmouth, Massachusetts

Recently our school system was shut down for a day due to maintenance problems. Students were told they had to have a "Makeup Day" because of the school closing.

One six-year-old was so distraught at this announcement. She replied, "But I'm not allowed to have makeup."

Bobbie Jean Cook Burnett
Russellville, Kentucky

Not quite sure what she meant, I asked her to explain. After repeating her question several times, she finally stomped her foot, put her hands on her hips, and exclaimed, "You know, Is it INdoors or OUTdoors?"

Debbie Hutchinson
Longmont, Colorado

As I entered the teachers' lunch room to grab a snack one morning, I noticed one of our first grade teachers working with a student.

I said, "I'm hungry. I missed breakfast this morning."

The little first grader looked at me and said, "I didn't know your name was Miss Breakfast."

Sue Polzin
Reston, Virginia

"How many years have I been teaching preschool? . . . This many."

At the end of the year, my third graders were making a book bag to hold all of their stories, journals, and "published" books that they had written. I told them one day they would appreciate all of the writing I had them do in my class.

I asked that they give me a call and thank me when they take out their written treasures and read them to their own children. One of my boys blurted out, "But won't you be dead, Ms. Dorian?"

Joan Dorian
Olympia, Washington

One year when teaching preschool, I was preparing students for a field trip to the local dairy. One student excitedly asked me, "What doors is it?"

It's not uncommon for some of my students to be at a dance with their families until midnight or after. One boy came into my classroom late after such an evening.

"Oh, Mrs. Waggoner," he began, "I am so sorry I am late to school; we went to a dance last night, and this morning I was sick at my feet!"

Louadah Waggoner
Fort Davis, Texas

As a sixth grade teacher with two very young children I find myself singing children's songs daily.

I can't sing very well and my students remind me of this regularly. This only makes me sing to them louder and more often.

One day after my son had received a musical puppy, I began singing the song "How much is that doggie in the window?"

The quietest student in my class spoke for the first time and jokingly said to me, "I'll give you $10 for that dog if you stop singing that song."

Deborah M. Loukotka
Pinckney, Michigan

I was talking to two of my sophomore junior-varsity basketball players in the hallway. I mentioned how well they play together, and always seem to know where the other person is on the floor. One replied, "Yeah, it's like we have ESPN."

Mark Mohre
Grand Blanc, Michigan

The last day of school before summer vacation was extremely hot, so I wore a sleeveless top in class.

As we said our good-byes, one little girl gave me a hug. She then leaned back and noticed some previously concealed "beauty marks" on my upper arm. She rubbed them and said, "Hey, Mrs. Basso! You have sprinkles!"

Danielle Basso
Highland Lakes, New Jersey

My fourth grade class was taking a practice test. I read the directions, "When you have finished the last question, stop and look up."

Several minutes later I was puzzled to see my students looking up at the ceiling. I wondered, "What are they doing?" Then I remembered my directions!

Diane Brown
Fresno, California

During a visit by the local fire department to my preschool class, one of the firefighters asked if anyone knew what to do if their clothes were on fire. One child shouted, "Stop, drop, and rock and roll!"

Sharon Baxter
Prairie Village, Kansas

As I was nearing my 60th birthday, I was talking with one of my kindergarten students.

Child: Mrs. Minney, are you old?
Me: No.
Child: What are you?
Me: In the middle.
Child: What does that mean?
Me: It means I'm not old and I'm not young.
Child: Does that mean that you're JUST RIGHT?

This is why I love teaching kindergarten!

Martha Minney
San Diego, California

Close, But No Cigar!

After my sixth grade music class asked questions about opera, I set up a bulletin board with covers from *Opera News* magazine. The students picked out the photo of Pavarotti right away.

But one boy looked puzzled and asked, "Didn't he have something to do with Princess Di's death?" I was trying to figure out what he meant when the rest of the class called out "No, that was the paparazzi!"

Renee Ashley
Huntington Station, New York

While studying the Southeastern region of the United States with my fourth grade class, I asked the students to name the insect that destroyed cotton crops. One student excitedly said, "That's easy! It was the Bullwinkle!"

Of course, he meant "boll weevil."

Elizabeth Lencho
Janesville, Wisconsin

My third graders were assigned to describe items on two T-shirts. One shirt had endangered animals looking over the globe and it said, "They were here first." The other shirt had a large apple core on it and said "Yearn to Learn." I asked if anyone knew what "yearn" meant. One student replied, "Isn't that when you have to go to the bathroom?"

Barbara Gillespie
Climax-Scotts, Michigan

Got Laughs?

- **Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206. Send E-mail to neatoday@nea.org.**
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